Adventures in ODYSSEY
FOCUS ON THE FAMILY PRESENTS
THE IMAGINATION STATION
31
Big Risks in Russia
MARIANNE HERING
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Big Risks in Russia

BOOK 31

MARIANNE HERING
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SERGIO CARIELLO

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®

A Focus on the Family resource
published by Tyndale House Publishers

To Jeff and Jeana Kendrick—obedient to their calling as smugglers and missionaries in Eastern Europe and the USSR.
–M.H.

Also in memory of “God’s Smuggler,” Brother Andrew (1928–2022).

Big Risks in Russia

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A Focus on the Family book published by Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188

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For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at csresponse@tyndale.com, or call 1-855-277-9400.

ISBN 978-1-64607-117-3

ISBN 978-1-68428-574-7 (ePub); ISBN 978-1-68428-575-4 (Kindle); ISBN 978-1-68428-573-0 (Apple)

Build: 2023-12-08 07:59:20 EPUB 3.0

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Secret Word Puzzle: How Far to Moscow?
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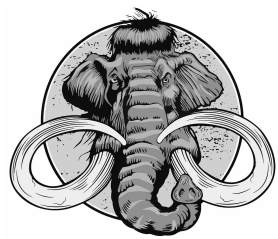
Prologue



The Imagination Station was invented by a kind, older gentleman named John Avery Whittaker. Whit has built several different Imagination Stations. One looked a little like a helicopter cockpit. Another was built around an old Model T automobile. Whit loaned the Model T machine to the government.

In their last adventure in the Imagination Station, cousins Patrick and Beth visited the time of Noah's ark. They helped Noah's family care for the animals and prepare the ark for the coming rains. A government agent named Amelia Darling followed them into the adventure using the Model T machine. Amelia had developed technology that linked the different Imagination Stations together using remote controllers.

Here's what you need to know:

- Amelia doesn't really have good moral judgment. She causes all kinds of trouble wherever she goes.
- The cousins have one of Amelia's remote controllers for

the Imagination Stations.

- The cousins want to find out why Amelia linked the two machines together and why she has been following them.
- Whit suggested that the cousins follow Amelia on their next adventure. That way, they can find out what she is planning and try to stop her if she is causing more trouble.

The VW Bus

Patrick slammed open the school's exit door. He raced toward the soccer field, dribbling a black-and-white ball with his feet. His backpack bounced against his ribcage. He was excited to play soccer with his friends after school. Suddenly, he heard a familiar voice behind him.

Patrick stopped in mid-dribble and turned around.

"Patrick!" Beth hurried toward him, waving something in her hand. "We have to go to Whit's End right away."

"Why?" Patrick asked.

"Amelia Darling is using the Model T Imagination Station," Beth said. "We're supposed to use the remote controller to follow her in the other machine."

Beth showed Patrick the remote. "It's blinking."

"I think that means Amelia is on the move!" Patrick said. "Let's get to Whit's End."

The cousins ran four blocks, passing Odyssey's town library and the big park on the way. They came to the door of Whit's End and slowed down.

Beth opened the door, and the bell above it jingled.

Patrick stepped inside and smelled the wonderful food being served in the soda shop. He wished they had time for a root beer float or a chocolate soda. He waved to Connie Kendall, who was working the cash register. The two cousins turned away from the soda shop and headed down the stairs.

Down in Whit's workshop, Beth called out, "Mr. Whittaker! Are you here?"

There was no answer. The inventor didn't seem to be there. But they could see the Imagination Station sitting in the middle of the room. It was humming. It sounded like it was ready to go. Patrick rushed to the machine.

He noticed a small keyboard had been installed on the dashboard. Also, there was a new light on it. The light was blinking green. The label below read *Amelia*.

Beth looked inside the machine too. "Hey! What's this on the seat?" She reached in and held up a folded piece of paper.

"Read it and find out." Patrick climbed in the machine and buckled his seat belt.

Beth buckled in too. "It looks like Whit's handwriting." She read the note:

> *To follow Amelia, push the green button on the remote three times. On the third push, push the red button on the dashboard. You'll follow Amelia to see what she's up to. Along the way, you'll meet one of my friends. Help him if you can. And remember to do things the Royal Way.*

Beth looked at Patrick. "The Royal Way?"

Patrick shrugged. "Maybe we're going to meet a royal family?"

Beth held the remote in her right hand. "One," she said and pushed the green button.

Patrick put his hand over the red button on the dashboard.

"Two," Beth said, pressing the button. "And . . . three." Beth pushed the button once more. Patrick's palm pressed down on the red dashboard button at the same time.

The machine tilted and whirled. Patrick felt as if he were free-falling from an airplane. His stomach lurched. His head spun.

Then everything went black.

The cousins climbed out of the Imagination Station. A crisp breeze swept over them. Beth felt a shiver and hugged herself to keep warm.

That's when she noticed her clothes. She wore a pink and navy-blue plaid blazer along with a navy-blue skirt. Her penny-loafer shoes were also navy blue. She felt her head and pulled off a navy-blue beret.

Patrick's clothes had a similar color pattern. His navy-blue blazer had two rows of gold buttons. A pink handkerchief was tucked into his breast pocket. The rest of his clothes—pants, turtleneck, and shoes—were bright white.

Beth thought the word *snazzy* described their outfits. She put her beret back on.

"We're in the sixties," Beth said. "The clothes say it all."

"But *where* in the sixties?" Patrick asked.

Beth looked around. They were standing on the side of a wide dirt road. The road's shoulder sloped steeply toward a lush landscape. Evergreens and cedars covered rolling hills.

"The grass is returning," Beth said. "And the flowers are sprouting leaves. It's spring!"

Suddenly an orange van came over the top of a hill. The engine's roar startled a flock of crows. They flew off to rest in a nearby evergreen tree.

"Maybe this van is part of the adventure." Patrick moved closer to the road. "I'll flag it down."

"Okay," Beth said. "Nothing here except countryside. And Amelia isn't the type to stick around here. Maybe this is Mr. Whittaker's friend?"

Patrick stepped to the middle of the road. He waved his arms above his head.

The van slowed and then stopped. Patrick recognized the vehicle as a classic Volkswagen van.

A tall man stepped out of the boxy vehicle. His hair and skin were pale as milk. He looked at the cousins and grinned. "Hello," he said. "I'm Swedish, but I speak English. Or perhaps

you know German?"

"English," Patrick said. "Though Beth's grammar is better."

Beth smiled at the compliment.

"Let me guess," the man said. A smile tugged at his bottom lip. "Are you children of aristocrats hiding from the communists?"

Beth knew that communists had a very different type of government than the United States did. And the word *aristocrat* gave Beth images of rich people in Europe. Lords and duchesses. People born wealthy and powerful. *Snooty,* she thought.

"Well," Beth said, "I do think my parents dislike communism. But we aren't rich."

The man laughed. "You're certainly not 'of the workers,'" he said. "How did you afford those snazzy clothes?"

Snazzy. Beth smiled. She'd been exactly right about their look.

Patrick frowned. "Well, I *am* kind of a worker," he said. "I deliver newspapers on the weekends."

"Hmm," the man said. He seemed lost in thought. Then he leaned over and whispered as if he didn't want the crows to hear him. "How would you two like to deliver *Bibles* instead?"

Pastor Lars Spens

"Why would we need to deliver Bibles? Don't people get them at church?" Patrick asked the tall man. "I got my Bible from Sunday school."

"There are practically no Bibles in the churches here," the man said. "And even fewer young people are in church. Soviet children are taught in school that there is no God."

"Soviet children?" Beth said. "Are we in Russia, um . . . I mean the USSR?"

The man cocked his head to one side. "Not here," he said. "This is Poland. In three kilometers I will leave Poland and go behind the Iron Curtain."

The man folded his arms across his chest. He looked at them as if he were a schoolteacher asking for homework. "Do you have your passports? Stamped with the correct visas?"

Patrick and Beth exchanged glances. Beth shrugged. Patrick searched the inside of his blazer for pockets. Beth did the same.

The cousins each pulled out passports from inner pockets. The cover of Patrick's passport was green. Beth's was red.

Both of the covers had a gold eagle emblem on them.

"Ah," the man said. "*American* children. I should have known."

Beth looked a little offended. "What's wrong with being American?" she asked.

The man didn't answer. He reached for Beth's red passport instead. She handed it to him. He opened it. "This is an embassy passport. Nice photo . . . Beth."

Patrick opened his green one. A black-and-white photo of himself was inside.

The man looked at the sky. "Thank You, Lord," he said aloud. "I knew You would help me." Then he looked at the cousins. "I had asked God for brave companions to help with my work. I was expecting someone older—perhaps a married couple who look like tourists. But you are much better. You look like rich American tourists. Do you think you can do a bit of Bible smuggling?"

"Well, we're following a secret agent," Patrick said. "It's part of a . . . training program set up by . . . a government official. So I think we can smuggle Bibles."

Patrick was a little uncomfortable with the exaggeration. It was *almost* true. Whit had loaned the Model T Imagination Station to the government. And Whit had sent them to follow Amelia, a government agent.

Beth rolled her eyes. "I don't think he has anything to do with Amelia," she said, pointing at the man. "I'm not sure we're supposed to go with him."

Patrick glared at Beth. He didn't want her spoiling his chance to do some undercover work. "Come on, Beth, this is a test run." He turned back to the man from the van. "It's true that we are here to find someone, but we can also help you deliver Bibles."

The man smiled. "Then let me introduce myself," he said. He offered a hand—a very large hand—to Patrick. "I am Pastor Lars Spens."

Patrick eagerly shook the man's hand. He wondered if Beth would refuse to help the pastor.

"You really prayed to God for help?" Beth asked.

Pastor Lars nodded. "I've been looking for the right partners to go with me to Moscow," he said. "I need help to find pastors there who will distribute Bibles to the believers."

"Okay," Beth said. "If you truly need us, we can look for our friend as we deliver Bibles."

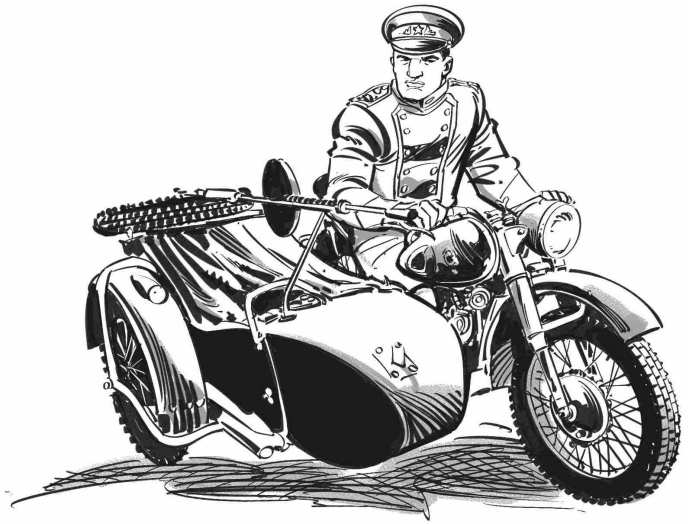
Patrick pumped his arm. Then, to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell," he sang out, "To Moscow we will go, to Moscow we will go!"

"Hi-ho, the derry-o," Beth responded, although not with much enthusiasm.

Patrick hoped they were doing the right thing. How could it not be? *Delivering Bibles is noble work*, he thought. *People should be able to read God's Word. What an incredible adventure this could be!*

So Patrick opened the side door of the van and hopped in.

Before Beth could climb inside the vehicle, she heard another engine. She turned and saw a man on a motorcycle approaching. An empty sidecar was attached to the motorcycle. The vehicle slowed to a stop a short distance back from the van. The driver looked at Pastor Lars and Beth silently. Then he pulled a notebook out of his back pocket.



Beth studied the motorcycle driver for a moment. She didn't think his blue uniform was for combat. It looked more like something to wear to special events. His cap was light blue with gold trim. In the center of the brim was a gold star.

The motorcycle rider wrote something in the notebook with a pencil.

Did he just copy the van's license plate number? she wondered.

Beth felt as if she was supposed to talk to the man. But Pastor Lars put his arm around her shoulders and steered her toward his van.

"Let's get you away from Soviet eyes," Pastor Lars said to Beth.

The driver revved the motorcycle and drove away.

Beth opened the side door and got into the backseat of the van. "What was that man doing here?" she asked.

"Something no good, probably," Pastor Lars said, climbing into the driver's seat. "I don't know why he would be in Poland at all. He was wearing the uniform of a KGB escort. Motorcycle agents are usually assigned only to important officials in Moscow."

"KGB?" Patrick said.

Pastor Lars said three long words in Russian. Beth thought she heard those words begin with the letters *K*, *G*, and *B*.

“Russian state security,” Pastor Lars said. “Kind of like your country’s CIA.”

Special agents, Beth thought. *Could Amelia be involved with the KGB?*

Beth liked the van’s white bench seat with orange interior trim. Orange curtains hugged the sides of each small window. Strings of wood beads hung behind the seat.

She pushed the beads aside. The back of the van had been converted into a bed. A tiny kitchen area was tucked into one back corner. Some luggage was crammed in the far back—a trunk, a musical instrument case, and two suitcases.

The pastor started the van and drove a little way. He talked about the Bug River they would cross. Then he told the cousins about what would happen at the border crossing.

“Guards of the Soviet Red Army will search our vehicle at the town of Brest. It’s in a part of the USSR known as White Russia,” he said. “There’s another, larger region to the south called the Ukraine.”

“Do you have anything illegal in here?” Beth asked.

“Well, there are at least one hundred Bibles in this van,” Pastor Lars said. “*Hidden* in this van. Religious books are burned in the USSR.”

Patrick asked, “What will happen if the guards find the Bibles?”

“Nothing good,” the pastor said. “Let me say a prayer of protection.”

Patrick and Beth closed their eyes.

“Lord,” Pastor Lars prayed, “please blind the eyes of the guards. Prevent them from finding the Bibles hidden in the van. Let us find favor with them.”

Beth opened her eyes and looked around. Were the Bibles in Pastor Lars’s suitcases? Or maybe in the kitchen cabinet? She wondered what would happen to Pastor Lars if the guards found the Bibles. Would he go to prison? She hoped he had them hidden well.

The van crossed over a twisty river. Along the banks grew tall grasses and bushy trees.

As Beth looked out the window, she saw tin signs on wood

posts had been placed every fifty feet or so. The signs weren't in English, but she could tell from the bold colors and size of the words that they were some kind of warning. Along the road were wire fences with coils of barbed wire at the top and bottom.

A young soldier in front of them waved at the van to stop it. He had a rifle slung over his shoulder.

Beth gulped. These guards seemed prepared to use deadly force.

Pastor Lars slowed the van and handed the soldier his passport. The soldier inspected it and gave it back to him. Then he motioned for the van to move along.

After another hundred yards, the van stopped outside a small building made of concrete and glass. Beth could see more soldiers inside.

A long mechanical arm blocked the road. It lifted, and one car slipped past. Five more cars were ahead of the van. They were waiting to be allowed into the USSR. A second line had only three cars.

"Can you go in the shorter line?" Patrick asked.

Pastor Lars said, "Westerners have to go in this line."

A little white car was at the front of their line. The seats were out.

Beth wondered if the VW would be inspected like that.

"What are the guards looking for?" Patrick asked. "Drugs?"

"That and anything else they don't like—or that they want for themselves," Pastor Lars said.

The guards looked underneath the vehicle. Then they looked under the hood.

"See them looking everywhere?" Pastor Lars said. "They're hunting for anti-Soviet items. Books, movies, or music like the Beatles. You can't even have an original copy of *Robinson Crusoe*."

"What's wrong with *Robinson Crusoe*?" Beth asked. "I learned a lot from that book."

"Mr. Crusoe is too independent to be an acceptable Soviet hero. The Soviets rewrote it to say he's on a team," Pastor Lars

said.

Patrick whistled softly. “That’s taking teamwork seriously.”

The guards now poked and prodded the white car’s seats. Beth prayed they wouldn’t find Pastor Lars’s Bibles.

Pastor Lars added, “The Soviets hate capitalism. They will take anything showing the success of free governments. They’ll often even take food if it comes from a non-Soviet country.”

Just then a guard in a green uniform knocked on the van’s passenger-side window.

Patrick used the window crank to lower the glass.

“Do you speak English or German?” Pastor Lars asked. “My Russian is very poor.”

This man had some gold cords on the shoulders of his uniform. “I speak both English and German,” he said. “But I prefer German.”

The guard walked around the van to the driver’s side.

The two men spoke in German. Pastor Lars showed his passport again.

“I need your passports,” Pastor Lars said to the cousins.

Beth and Patrick gave their passports to Pastor Lars. Pastor Lars handed all three little books to the guard.

The guard flipped through the passports. He said something loud in a burst of surprise and anger. Beth thought it might be a Russian curse word.

The guard leaned his head inside the van. In English he said, “Why didn’t you tell me you had a guest of the National Science Board with you?” He held up Beth’s red passport. “This is authorized by the First Chairman himself.”

Beth wondered who the First Chairman was. He must be important because Pastor Lars turned around and looked at her in surprise.

The guard did a quick search in the van. He rummaged through the pastor’s luggage and boxes. The small instrument case was opened and a violin was inspected carefully. He sifted through the contents underneath the sink. Then he shouted to the other guards to lift the barrier. He waved the

van to go ahead.

Pastor Lars pressed the gas pedal down and the van jumped forward. Beth held on to the seat. The strings of wood beads clacked together.

The pastor and the two cousins crossed over the border and into the USSR. They had slipped behind the Iron Curtain. They were all safe.

For now.

The Money Belt

Pastor Lars turned on the radio and found a Russian music station.

Patrick couldn't understand any of the words in the songs. Neither could Pastor Lars. But he sang anyway. He made up his own words in Swedish or hummed along. He motioned to Patrick when he wanted the station changed.

Patrick wished he had a translation device, as he'd had in their two previous adventures. So he checked his pockets again. He found only a red lapel pin with a weird metal design.

He studied the pin. The gold metal design looked like an alien ship.

He leaned sideways and looked toward Beth in the backseat. He showed the pin to Beth. "Do you think this has something to do with the National Science Board?"

"Could be," she said. "It looks . . . space related. I read

that in the sixties the Russians and the Americans were both trying to get astronauts to the moon. *That* sounds like something Amelia would be interested in."

Beth pulled something out of her pocket. It was a metal, cone-shaped object. She had no idea what it was. It looked a bit like a showerhead. Or maybe a sprayer for a dishwasher. Along the side it said, *Made in the USA*.

Patrick stared out at the open meadows and farm fields. He thought about the pin and Beth's odd object. *What kind of adventure is this?* he wondered.

After a couple of hours, Patrick found a classical music station. Pastor Lars took one hand off the steering wheel and waved it around as if he were a conductor.

Two more hours passed. Patrick's stomach was feeling empty. Patrick looked at the fuel gauge. It looked almost empty too. He was sure the van would run out of gas. Then they would be stuck on the side of the road.

A small group of buildings appeared up ahead. Patrick turned off the radio. "Are we going to stop and buy gas?" he asked.

"Well," Pastor Lars said, "I don't have any money. We will trust the King of kings to provide. I call it the Royal Way. In this case, 'the Royal Way' comes from Luke 10:4."

Patrick remembered Whit had written about the Royal Way. But he didn't know that Bible verse. He looked over his shoulder at Beth.

She shrugged. "I don't remember that verse."

Pastor Lars said, "I'm trusting the people I'm serving to provide food and money," Pastor Lars said. "In Luke 10:4, Jesus told the disciples to go out preaching. But he told them not to take a purse or a bag or even extra sandals."

Suddenly the van's engine sputtered. Pastor Lars shifted the gearstick and steered the vehicle to a large clearing on the side of the road. The van stopped moving. The engine was silent.

Patrick looked at the gas gauge. It was totally empty.

Beth, Patrick, and Pastor Lars sat in silence.

Maybe we shouldn't have come with Pastor Lars, Beth thought. *We'll never find Amelia at this rate.*

"I'm afraid the Luke 10:4 approach is sometimes tricky. But God always provides," Pastor Lars said.

Silence filled the van again.

"Do either of you have any money?" Pastor Lars asked.

The cousins each checked their blazer pockets again.

Beth held out the showerhead-like object. Patrick showed the red pin.

"A lot of travelers carry cash in a money belt," Pastor Lars said hopefully.

Patrick felt his waist. He *did* have a belt on. He undid the buckle and slid the belt out of the loops. There was a tiny zipper on the underside. He opened the zipper and pulled out several small rolls of money.

Beth stood up behind the front seats to see better. The bills were colored brown, purple, orange, and bright green. Each bill had the same man's image on it. He had a pointy nose and a short, neatly trimmed beard.

"Those are the new Soviet *rubles*," Pastor Lars said. He pointed to the face on the money. "That's Vladimir Lenin. He's the Soviets' number one hero."

Patrick inspected the rubles. Several bills were valued at one hundred, but others were twenty-five, fifty, and ten. They counted the money out loud.

"One thousand rubles!" Beth said. She turned to Pastor Lars. He seemed even paler than normal. A gray tint flushed his face. It was as if he were suddenly ill.

"Is that a lot of money?" Beth asked.

"It's enough to buy several VW buses," the pastor said. "Enough to print a thousand Russian language Bibles."

Patrick peeled off a bill valued at ten rubles. "I guess this is enough for gas?"

Pastor Lars nodded. "They might not have enough change

to give you." He looked out the window. "Look, I don't want to leave the van in case the police come by. They might tow the van away if I'm not inside. Can you two walk the rest of the way to town? Buy a gas can and fill it up."

"Yes, we can do that," Beth said. She helped Patrick put the money back into the belt.

"Be careful," Pastor Lars said. "Don't let anyone know you have that many rubles. I wish *I* didn't know. That kind of money can only bring trouble."

Matzo Bread

The walk to the gas station took ten minutes.

The ten-ruble bill was in Patrick's blazer's front pocket. He fingered it nervously as he looked around.

He noticed that red seemed to be a popular color. The two gas pumps were red. The posters tacked to walls outside the small building were red, black, and white. He couldn't read the writing on the posters, but he recognized Lenin's face on some of them.

The service station attendant was working on a rusty truck. Its engine hood was up. The attendant was bent over the engine, both arms inside.

A man in overalls was pumping gas into a small green car. A few other cars were parked nearby.

"Excuse me," Beth said to the man. "Do you speak

English?"

He looked at Beth with a confused expression. He shook his head several times. Then he paid the mechanic, got inside his car, and drove away.

Three little girls sat inside a white car at the second pump. The mother was holding a gas can. The father was filling the can. Two more cans sat next to the car's trunk.

Patrick approached the man pumping gas. "Excuse me, do you speak English?" Patrick asked.

"Yes," the man said, turning away from the gas pump toward Patrick. But then Beth grabbed Patrick's arm. "That KGB motorcycle agent is coming," Beth said softly. "We have to hide."

Beth quickly led Patrick inside the gas station's little building. She moved to the back of the room and crouched behind a table that had a cash register and some tools on it. Patrick stayed near the window to look outside. He was careful to keep out of sight.

The agent got off the motorcycle. He talked with the family. The father had gotten back inside the car to get his family's paperwork. He handed the KGB agent his passport. He was shaking his head. *No, no, no.* He seemed to be frustrated by whatever questions the agent was asking.

The wife walked to the back of the car. She opened the trunk and put the two gas cans inside. Then Patrick saw her do something strange. She took a small black suitcase out of the trunk. She lowered it to the pavement slowly so that it rested flat. Then she kicked it a few times, walking slowly around the passenger side of the car as she did. She gave it one more kick so that the suitcase slid underneath the car next to them.

They're hiding something in that suitcase, Patrick thought.

The KGB agent was looking in the back of the car now. He motioned for the three girls to get out. The woman opened the back door of the car. The girls scooted out and followed their mother toward the little building.

Suddenly the driver of the car covering the suitcase returned. He hopped in his car and drove out of the gas

station parking lot. The suitcase was now sitting out in the open.

The KGB agent's attention was still on the father of the family as he sat in the driver's seat. Patrick thought the agent seemed to be asking the man a lot of questions.

Patrick dashed out of the building and gave the suitcase a few more kicks. It made a scuffing noise as it moved over the ground. It stopped under the truck that the mechanic was fixing. The black suitcase blended in with the car's tires and the shadows. It was practically invisible.

Then Patrick slipped back inside the building and watched from the window.

Now the KGB agent was searching the car. He checked under the hood and used a flashlight to look underneath the car. He opened the trunk and moved the gas cans around. He found a picnic basket and dumped the food on the ground.

Then the agent got on his motorcycle. He tipped his hat in a way that seemed to mock the man. The engine revved as he drove away.

Beth heard the KGB agent's motorcycle leave the parking lot. She joined Patrick at the window. He told her what had just happened with the suitcase.

"Let's go see if they're okay," Patrick said.

The three little girls were back inside the car. They sat looking out the front window at their father. He was on his hands and knees next to the truck that was being fixed. Then

he stood up holding the suitcase.

His wife rushed to his side and hugged him.

Together they approached the cousins.

"Thank you," the man said to Patrick in good English. "You saved me from having to pay a large fine."

"Or take a trip to prison," the woman said.

Prison? Beth felt uncomfortable. Had Patrick saved some criminals? What was in the suitcase? Guns? Drugs?

The man must have sensed her confusion. He said, "The KGB agent saw the word *Jewish* on my passport. Today is Passover eve. We're going to visit my cousins, and we brought some traditional food."

"Is celebrating Passover illegal?" Beth asked.

The man and the woman exchanged glances.

"Not exactly," she said. "The Soviets like to say our synagogues are open. But they made it illegal to bake *matzo* bread there. We have to make it at home. And when the police find it, they take it from us. Most times there is a punishment for having it."

"Why?" Beth asked. "How can it be wrong to have bread?"

"It's a special bread without yeast," the man said. "It is a symbol of the Jewish faith. The Soviets try to stamp out all religions and their symbols."

The woman placed the suitcase on top of the car's trunk. She opened it. Inside was a white pillowcase. The woman peeled back the fabric. Beth saw it had several layers of matzo. It reminded her of crackers rather than bread.

"It's a mini miracle the matzo didn't crumble," Patrick said. "I kicked that suitcase pretty hard."

The woman picked up the food that the motorcycle driver had dumped on the ground. The man put the matzo back in the suitcase. He opened the trunk, but then he spun around.

"Why are you two even here?" he asked. "You don't have a car. And you are obviously Americans."

Beth frowned. The snazzy clothes were going to get them into trouble.

"About that . . ." Patrick said. "We're out of gas. We're parked a little ways down the road. We need to buy a can and

some fuel. Can you ask the mechanic to help us? I don't think he speaks English."

The woman smiled. "We can do better than that." She went to the trunk and put the basket inside. She hoisted out one of the gas cans. "You may have this one with our gratitude."

"Yes," the husband said. "You helped us. We'd like to help you."

The woman set the gray can at Patrick's feet.

Patrick shook his head. He put his hand in his pocket. Beth could tell he was going to say "no thank you" and buy the gas himself.

"God's provision," Beth whispered so only Patrick could hear. "Just like Pastor Lars said."

Patrick relaxed and took his hand out of his pocket.

Just then another car pulled up into the service station. The new driver honked the car's horn.

"Well, we've been here too long," the man said. The couple got into their car. The man turned on the engine and then rolled his window down.

"One more thing," he said. "The KGB agent is looking for an American named Elizabeth . . . something. I didn't catch the last name. If she's a friend of yours, you might want to warn her."

Beth's eyes widened in surprise. *Elizabeth is me,* she thought. *The agent is looking for me.*

The Lecture

Patrick carried the gas can back to the place where the van had stopped. Pastor Lars filled the van's gas tank and put away the can. They all got in the van, and Pastor Lars started the engine.

They drove to a large campground near a wide stream. Most of the people had tents set up near their cars.

Pastor Lars explained that there was a section of the campground for Westerners. Anytime Westerners stayed somewhere, the police or business owners had to take their passports. It didn't matter if it was a campground or a five-star hotel.

He drove to an open space and parked. Only two other vehicles were in that section. A lone man was sitting in a cloth chair near an old truck. He wore a dark wool coat and a dark fur hat. A young couple sat inside a tent next to a little yellow car.

"It's already dusk," Pastor Lars said. "The Christians in Minsk will be bold and meet tonight because it's Good Friday. I have an address of a church's meeting place and the name of

the pastor."

A soldier came to talk to Pastor Lars. He had a satchel draped on one shoulder and a rifle strapped across the other. Pastor Lars handed the soldier their passports. He inspected them and then slipped them into the satchel.

A few other soldiers with rifles walked about. Patrick thought they seemed ready to arrest anyone who broke the law.

Patrick stayed in the van with Beth and looked through the windows. The man in the wool coat started a meal over an open fire. Patrick could smell roasted potatoes and pork. It made him even hungrier.

Patrick asked, "Are we going to have dinner?"

"Don't worry about that right now," Pastor Lars said. "God will provide." He patted his belly. "Does a man good to skip a meal every once in a while."

"Luke 10:4," Beth said.

Patrick patted his own stomach and felt the money belt. He felt better knowing he could buy food if he really needed to. But his stomach was rumbling. He admired Pastor Lars's faith, but he was hungry now.

Pastor Lars turned on the radio and listened for a few minutes to classical music. He turned the radio off when a men's choir came on and began singing in Russian.

"Is it time to go to church?" Beth asked.

"We'll leave after dark," Pastor Lars said.

Pastor Lars asked Beth to hand him his violin. She got it from the back of the van.

Pastor Lars briefly tuned the instrument and then rolled down his window to make room for the bow. He began to play a hymn.

The man with the station wagon and the couple in the campground looked up. Two of the guards seemed interested in the music too.

Then Pastor Lars put his violin away.

"That was beautiful," Patrick said. "Did you stop because

someone might hear you playing?"

"Yes, I shouldn't call more attention to us," the pastor said.

Pastor Lars rolled his window up and began reading aloud from an English Bible till about eight o'clock. The only light was from a moon that was three-quarters full.

"Okay, time to go," Pastor Lars said.

The three quietly left the van and crept through the campground. They came to the main road. Pastor Lars led them along the side of this road toward the town. They were hidden by trees and bushes.

He turned a flashlight on every hundred yards or so. Then he would turn it off, and they would walk farther. If a car drove past, they turned their backs, crouched, and stayed still.

Beth held on to the pastor's jacket so she could stay close to him. Patrick held Beth's hand.

Pastor Lars sang ever so softly to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell."

"How do you know that?" Beth whispered.

"It is an old song," he said. "One that was old even to my grandmother. I haven't thought of it in years. Then you two sang it earlier today."

"The Christians in the dark," sang Patrick, making up new words to the tune.

"Hi-ho, the derry-o," sang Beth and Pastor Lars. They repeated the little song several times.

In the center of town, Pastor Lars shushed them. He got a map out of his pocket and turned on the flashlight. "Not far now," he said.

They walked from street to street. At last they arrived at a street sign. "Here it is," Pastor Lars said. "Polaki Lane."

Lanterns bobbed in the woods behind the houses.

"Follow those lights," Pastor Lars said.

Just over a dozen people had gathered near a clump of trees.

The highway was nearby. Patrick thought it was a good idea to be near it. The noise from the cars would cover up most of the sounds of the meeting.

The group of Christians was mostly older people. The women wore shawls and scarves. The men had on shapeless tweed jackets; some wore round hats.

The cousins and the tall, pale Swedish pastor stopped at the edge of the clearing. One man in a green coat and a fur hat slowly approached them.

“Pastor Volkov?” Pastor Lars said.

The man didn’t answer. He embraced Pastor Lars instead.

Pastor Lars introduced the cousins.

Pastor Volkov asked, “And you are the one they call—how to say it in English?—the Musical Ghost?”

“The very one,” Pastor Lars answered.

Patrick thought the nickname was appropriate. The pastor loved music and his hair was as white as snow.

“Is it time for me to give my lecture?” Pastor Lars asked.

“Yes,” Pastor Volkov said. “You may give us a lecture on the love of God.”

Patrick and Beth stood on either side of Pastor Lars. He began in English, then paused while Mr. Volkov translated into Russian.

Pastor Lars greeted the congregation. He said Christians in the West cared deeply for the Christians under Soviet persecution.

Pastor Lars pulled a Bible out of his pocket. Patrick could see that it was an English Bible. Then the pastor began his lecture, which Patrick could tell was really a sermon about Jesus’ death. The passage was from the book of Mark, when Jesus was dying on the cross.

Holy
Bible

“Here Jesus says, ‘My God, my God, why have you deserted me?’” Pastor Lars said. “But God has not deserted you Christians here. He loves you more than you can imagine. This is a hard time, to be sure. But God is still with you!”

The people seemed moved. Some men even cried.

When he finished his lecture, Pastor Lars handed the Bible to Patrick. He took out his violin and began playing a sweet, beautiful song. His bow flowed smoothly across the strings. The congregation recognized the tune and began to sing the hymn together.

Suddenly a whistle blew. *Tweet!*

A voice shouted something. It was in Russian, but to Patrick the word sounded a lot like “Police!”

The Russian Bible

Beth felt a person on each side of her take an arm. Then her escorts began running, leading her somewhere. She didn't know she could run so fast in the dark. It felt as if angels were carrying her.

Tweet! Tweet! Tweet! The whistle blew in spurts. The police officer shouted in-between whistle blows.

Then other angry voices joined in. *Are there more police officers now?* she wondered. *How many Christians will be caught?*

Her escorts stopped running at the back door of a house with a wide porch.

One man reached around her and opened the door. The hinges creaked. She was inside. More footsteps pounded on the wood porch behind her.

Beth stood still and listened to her escorts move around inside. Several more people came inside the house.

Her breathing was raspy from running. Her heart thumped wildly.

"Beth," she heard Patrick say. "Are you here?"

"Yes," she said. "Are you okay?"

"I think so," Patrick said.

Soon a woman led the cousins down a narrow staircase. The woman pushed a flashlight into Beth's hand.

The woman said something in Russian. Then Beth heard the woman's footsteps going back up the stairs.

Beth turned on the flashlight and looked around. The floor was dirt. The walls were wood panels. She guessed she and Patrick were in some kind of secret compartment.

She shined the flashlight on Patrick. He still had the Bible from Pastor Lars. Then she shined the light around the room. A stack of blankets was on the floor near a wall.

Patrick set the Bible down and handed a plaid blanket to Beth. Then he plopped down on the pile of blankets.

Beth sat down next to him, snuggled into the wool blanket, and leaned against the wall.

"Hey," Patrick said, "here's a tin container. It's full of cookies."

"God will provide," she whispered to Patrick. "Luke 10:4."

"Yes," he said, chewing a cookie. "Shortbread."

Beth reached for the tin and picked up a cookie. She bit into it.

"Where is Pastor Lars?" Patrick asked. "Do you think he was caught?"

Beth swallowed. She wished she had some water. "He must have run in a different direction," Beth said. "God will take care of him, though. At least I hope He will."

"When do you think we'll find Amelia?" Patrick asked.

"I don't know," Beth said. "I can't think why Amelia's Imagination Station program has a Bible smuggler in it. She's all about science and becoming famous for something."

"And why do I have so much money?" Patrick asked.

Beth had no answers. But she had other things on her mind. She turned off the flashlight and stayed awake for a little while. She prayed, asking God for safety for Pastor Lars and the other Christians.

Patrick woke when the door to the secret compartment slid open. A flood of light filled the cozy hiding space. A woman wearing a cream-colored shawl stood in the opening. She was only a little taller than Patrick.

Beth yawned and stretched her arms above her head. She still looked sleepy. Her clothes were rumpled and her beret was missing.

Patrick brushed the cookie crumbs off of his blazer.

The woman said something in Russian. Patrick didn't understand a single word.

"Nadia," the woman said simply. She pointed to her breastbone.

"Patrick," Patrick said, pointing to himself. He motioned toward Beth with his head. "Beth."

The woman wrapped the shawl around herself tightly. "Patrick. Beth."

"I think we need a Russian–English dictionary," Beth said.

"That would be nice," Patrick said. "I do have this English Bible. But that's not going to help."

"Actually, maybe it can," Beth said. "That is, if this woman has a Russian Bible. And if we can remember a few of our memory verses."

Patrick showed the Bible to Nadia. Her eyes lit up with approval.

Beth said, "Bible" and pointed to it.

Nadia nodded cheerfully. "Bible," she said.

"Do you have a Bible?" Patrick asked. "A Russian Bible?"

Nadia nodded again, seemingly understanding Patrick. She motioned for the cousins to come with her.

The cousins followed her up the stairs into the kitchen. Iron pots and skillets hung from the ceiling. Tin cans sat on shelves. Brightly colored dish towels hung from the oven door handle. A fire burned in a large woodstove.

Nadia left the room. Several minutes later she came back with a large, old book. It was leather with brass decorations on the corners. A wood and brass cross was affixed to the front.

"What do we want to ask first?" Beth asked Patrick.

“Probably something easy.”

He wanted to ask where Pastor Lars was. He wanted to know if the police had arrested any Christians. But those certainly weren’t simple questions.

Patrick was hungry, and they were in the kitchen. He said, “May we have breakfast? That’s an easy question.”

“Okay,” Beth said. “The Bible says Jesus ate breakfast with his disciples. It was when he appeared after rising from the dead.” She flipped through the English Bible till she came near the end of John’s Gospel. “There,” she said. “Chapter 21, verse 12. Jesus was cooking breakfast.”

Patrick motioned that he’d like to use the Russian Bible. Nadia handed it to him. It was a family Bible. In the front pages, there was a big list of what looked like names and dates. Some of the dates went back to 1840.

Patrick quickly found the New Testament. Then he counted the book divisions till he came to the fourth book. After that, he followed the numbers that marked the chapters and verses until he came to the right place.

Patrick pointed to the verse. Nadia looked at it. She smiled and nodded.

Nadia stood on her tiptoes and reached for something on a high shelf. She lowered her arm and showed them a can of sardines.

“Oh,” Patrick said. “Jesus was making fish and bread for breakfast, so she thinks we want fish.”

“It’s good manners to eat what a host gives you,” Beth said with a smile.

“Isn’t there a verse about bacon?” Patrick asked. “Or donuts?”

“Bible people didn’t eat pork,” Beth said. “I can ask for bread, though, without the fish.”

Patrick smiled.

Beth showed Nadia John 6:35 in the Russian Bible. Beth read, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never grow hungry.”

Nadia nodded. “*Da*,” she said. She opened a wood box on the kitchen counter and took out a round loaf of bread. She

cut thick slices and spread butter on them.

Patrick and Beth sat at the little table and ate. The bread was soft inside but had a thick crust. It tasted a bit sour. Patrick thought it was delicious.

Nadia gave them each a glass of milk. Patrick chugged his glass quickly. He wiped his hands on a napkin after he had finished eating.

Patrick picked up the English Bible. He flipped through the pages. He stopped at a psalm that had the word *thanks*. Next, he found that verse in the Russian Bible.

Nadia smiled when she read the words from Psalm 9:1.

"Find a Scripture that has the word *pastor*," Beth said. "We need to know about Pastor Lars and Pastor Volkov."

Suddenly Patrick heard heavy footsteps. Someone was on the back porch. Then came the knocking. *Tap, tap, tappity tap.* The back door creaked open.

The cousins stood to rush downstairs. But Nadia stopped them. She tapped on the counter. *Tap, tap, tappity tap.*

The tapping is a code that means it's safe, Patrick thought.

Pastor Volkov rushed into the kitchen. His right hand was wrapped in a bandage. There were several spots of blood on the white gauze.

The pastor greeted Nadia in Russian and gave her a hug. She took his bandaged hand and kissed it. *Nadia is Pastor Volkov's wife,* Patrick thought.

"What happened to your hand?" Beth asked.

"It is nothing," Pastor Volkov said. "Just a disagreement with the police."

"The Musical Ghost has vanished," he continued. "And everyone else escaped too. But they know I was there. They questioned me. They will search this house any minute."

His glance landed on the Bibles. "Those must be hidden," he said. "We could go to prison for having them."

Nadia picked up the old Russian Bible, her family Bible. She started to leave the room.

The sound of a car in the front of the house made her freeze. Beth looked outside the window. "It is a blue car with a red stripe."

Nadia had seen the car too. "*Politsiya*," she said.

Pastor Volkov nodded. "Police," he said. He grabbed the Russian Bible from his wife's arms and shoved it inside the wood stove.

Beth picked up the English Bible and shoved it in the stove too.

"Go out back," Pastor Volkov said. "No time to hide."

Patrick grabbed Beth's hand, and they ran toward the back porch together.

The sound of Nadia's sobs and the smell of burning paper followed them out the door.

The KGB Escort

Beth and Patrick ran away from the Volkovs' house. They ran in the direction of the highway and hid behind some bushes. The cars whizzed past Polaki Lane. Some of them were police cars.

Beth shivered with fear. "I think we should go back to the van," she said. "Maybe Pastor Lars is there. He would want to get the Bibles."

"I really don't want to leave Pastor Lars," Patrick said, "but it's not safe to go back to the campground. I have plenty of money. We could somehow find a taxi and go somewhere."

"Like where?" Beth said.

"That science place that's mentioned on your passport," he said. "Maybe Amelia is there."

"Our passports are with the guard at the campground," Beth said.

"That's right," Patrick said. "We can't stay anywhere that's official without them. So maybe we buy camping tents and food. We hide in the wilderness."

"How long will we camp?" Beth asked. She raised her

hands in a questioning gesture. “And where will we buy those things?”

“Okay,” Patrick said. “We’ll go back to the van. Pastor Volkov said no one else got caught at the church meeting. So maybe no one is looking for us. Or Pastor Lars.”

“Yes, that’s plan A,” Beth said. She studied the area.

“What’s plan B?” Patrick asked.

“I don’t know yet, but we’ll figure it out,” she said. She pointed toward a thicket of bushes. “Doesn’t that way go to the campground?”

“Actually, it’s this way. To the left,” Patrick said. “I remember stepping over those roots.” He pointed to some trees with a little stream crossing over their roots.

Beth nodded and began to walk that direction. “Okay, left it is. It should be a fifteen-minute walk. That’s about how long it took us last night.”

After walking for about ten minutes, Patrick stopped. “Look!” he said, pointing to a dead tree.

Beth’s beret was hanging from a low branch. She grabbed it, shook it off, and put it on her head. “I guess this means we are going the right way toward the campground.”

Soon the cousins were outside the campground. They didn’t see any police cars parked at the entrance. But Beth’s heart sank when she saw the van. It was being searched by soldiers. The seats were out. The stuffing had been removed. Pastor Lars’s luggage was spread out on the ground. The refrigerator lay on its side. The van had been lifted and stood on blocks of wood. The wheels had been taken off.

The good news was that the Musical Ghost was still nearby. As the men searched his van, Pastor Lars stood near a tree while calmly playing his violin. Also good was that the guards were still looking. They hadn’t found the Bibles. At least not yet.

“I think it’s time for that plan B,” Patrick said.

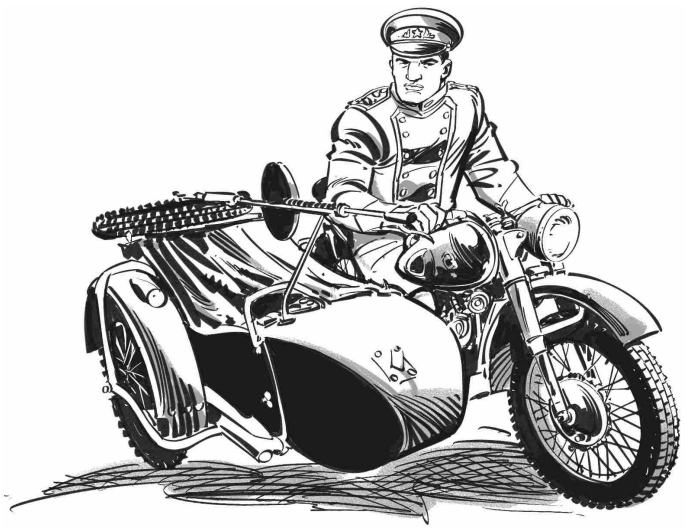
Beth turned to leave the campground.

“Uh-oh,” she said.

The KGB agent drove his motorcycle right up to them. He smiled and held up something small and red for the two to

see. It was Beth's red embassy passport.

Patrick's first instinct was to run, but he didn't want to desert Beth or Pastor Lars. He willed himself to stand still.



The KGB agent opened the passport and studied it. He looked at Beth and said, "I have been looking for you." His Russian accent was thick. "The National Science Board requests your presence in Moscow."

Beth stepped forward. She adjusted her beret. To Patrick, it seemed she grew three inches taller. "The National Science Board can wait," she said, lifting her chin. "It seems my friend has a problem." She pointed to Pastor Lars and the nearly destroyed VW bus. "I won't go to Moscow until he is let go. Oh, and his van needs to be put back together too."

"Your friend's troubles are not my concern," the KGB escort said. "Please come with me now."

"I will not," Beth said.

The KGB officer said, "Yes, you will." He pulled a pistol from a holster on his belt. "I am to bring you—as you Americans say—'by whatever means necessary.'"

"I guess this is plan C," Patrick said. "Go with him to the National Science Board, whatever that is. We'll find you in

Moscow. I promise."

Beth's bottom lip quivered. She said to the agent, "No need to be so mean."

Patrick made a sign with his hands. He flashed both his palms up, his fingers spread. *Ten*. Then he held up one hand with fingers spread and his thumb tucked in. *Four*.

Beth looked at him for a moment. *Message received,* she thought. *Luke 10:4*. Then she nodded and climbed into the motorcycle's passenger car.

The KGB agent revved the engine by twisting the handgrip. Then the motorcycle—and Beth with it—disappeared up the road.

8

The Inspection

Patrick and Pastor Lars needed the van to go to Moscow and find Beth. But it had been stripped and searched. It wasn't going anywhere.

"We've got to get the VW back together quickly," Pastor Lars said. "Can you help?"

Patrick pushed up the sleeves on his blazer. "I'm ready. Just tell me what to do."

Pastor Lars grabbed some tools from inside the van and raised the vehicle up with a portable jack so he could free each wheel from the wooden blocks. He showed Patrick how to lift the wheels onto the van and tighten the nuts that held them in place.

Pastor Lars shoved stuffing back into the seats. Patrick found some duct tape to help keep the stuffing in. They lifted the seats inside the van together.

Pastor Lars attached the kitchen items against the wall of the van. He repacked his suitcases and put them back inside. The last thing to go in was the violin.

The whole time Patrick wondered about the Bibles. Where were they hidden? He simply couldn't imagine one hundred Bibles in the van.

As they climbed inside the front seats, Patrick peered in the back of the van. The backseat looked empty without Beth.

The guard with the satchel approached the open window on the driver's side. He returned Patrick's and Pastor Lars's passports.

"Please leave Minsk," the soldier said. "You are no longer welcome in our city." He patted his rifle to show he was serious.

"Yes, sir," Patrick said.

The guard leaned in the window and looked Pastor Lars in the eyes. "I heard that you don't like our national anthem. And I know you're hiding something religious," the guard said. "I've been informed that you had an English Bible. I searched your van, but I couldn't find it."

Pastor Lars said, "Every man is searching for something. Try looking for God. He can easily be found."

The guard's face turned red. "Talking about God is not the Soviet way," he said.

Pastor Lars nodded and drove out of the campground.

They were finally alone. "What happened last night?" Patrick asked. "Everybody seemed happy before the policeman arrived."

"There must have been an informant at the Good Friday worship," Pastor Lars said. "Someone told the police where the church was meeting. That person also told them about my violin and my Bible. Otherwise, the van might not have been searched."

Patrick told Pastor Lars about his and Beth's night. He talked about Pastor and Mrs. Volkov and their secret room. "I'm sorry about your burned Bible," Patrick said. "Pastor Volkov had to burn their family's Bible."

"That hurts my heart," Pastor Lars said. "But I don't want trouble for Pastor Volkov. He's already been to prison for leading churches. It would be terrible if he got arrested again."

Pastor Lars turned east at a stoplight. "The man next to us at the campground made my troubles worse," he said. "He told the guards I turned off the Soviet national anthem."

"Did you?" Patrick asked. He remembered the peppy song sung by the men's choir.

"Of course," Pastor Lars said. "That song is a disgrace. The lyrics uplift men who don't fear God. It sings praises to Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. Those men are responsible for the deaths of millions of their own people."

Pastor Lars reached over and turned on the radio. He turned the knob till he found a folk music station. Then he started humming along.

Patrick looked at the clock on the dashboard. Beth and the KGB escort had left three hours before. The motorcycle had been going fast. The van was going under the speed limit.

Beth will reach Moscow four hours before we will, Patrick thought. *I hope she isn't hurt.*

The little sidecar was open to the wind. Beth was cold. The agent had given her a wool blanket, but the wind still chilled her.

She said a prayer of thanks when the KGB agent stopped for gas. She would have a chance to warm up.

The motorcycle and sidecar stopped in line at a red pump. The drivers of the other cars quickly drove away. Beth guessed they didn't want to be near a KGB agent.

The agent pulled up to the pump. He got off his motorcycle and paid the service station attendant. Then he started pumping gas into his vehicle. He was standing right next to Beth.

Beth wanted to know who the First Chairman was. He had issued her a visa. Maybe it was the man whose picture was on the money.

"Who is the First Chairman?" Beth asked. "Is it Lenin?"

Her escort smiled. His eyes twinkled with merriment. "I always heard you Americans were jokesters!" he said. "Funny! Very funny!"

Beth decided she'd made a silly mistake. She wouldn't ask any more questions about the First Chairman.

She tried a different one. She figured the KGB would know about Amelia. "Have you heard of a woman named Amelia Darling?"

The KGB agent laughed again. He put the gas nozzle back on the red pump. He walked into the service station's little office. He returned holding out a Soviet newspaper and showed Beth a page.

Beth looked at the newspaper. She couldn't read any of the words, but she certainly recognized the face of Amelia Darling.

"Yes, I've heard of Amelia Darling," the man said. "Miss Darling is making news every day."

The Daffodils

Patrick and Pastor Lars rode along the highway. The afternoon sun streamed inside the van. Pastor Lars was listening to classical music again. Suddenly he reached over and turned off the radio. “Enough ballets. *Sleeping Beauty*. *Romeo and Juliet*,” he said to himself. “Time to sing some hymns.”

Patrick listened to the pastor singing. He also watched the needle on the gas gauge hover near the empty mark. For an hour the needle stayed there and didn’t dip.

We should have run out of fuel by now, Patrick thought. *Is God helping the gas last longer?*

Patrick saw a beautiful white building with a bell tower. It sat right on a road beside a small river. It looked like it was several hundred years old. “That’s a neat building,” Patrick said. “Is it a church?”

“Hmm,” Pastor Lars said, lowering his head and looking out the front window. “It *is* a church. We should stop.”

“But what about finding Beth in Moscow? What about gas?”

“We will arrive in God’s time,” Pastor Lars said. “Not a second too late or a second too early.”

Pastor Lars took the next exit. He made a few twisty turns and found the church. Up close, the building looked a little shabby. No one was caring for its roof or the steeple.

Pastor Lars and Patrick walked around the church. They turned the corner and saw a man digging in a small garden. A row of pretty yellow daffodils and a few red tulips were behind him.

The man stood. His black coat looked expensive. His hat had shiny black fur. His face was freshly shaved.

Patrick wondered why a man like that was digging in a garden. His pants had soil on the knees. His fingernails were dirty.

“Hello,” Patrick said. “Do you speak English?”

The man shook his head.

Pastor Lars greeted the man in what sounded like German. They spoke for a while. Patrick wished he could understand them. They seemed to talk about something exciting.

The men hugged after a few minutes. They patted each other on the back.

Then Pastor Lars introduced Patrick to the gardener. He called the gentleman Boris, but Patrick guessed it wasn’t his real name.

Boris nodded at Patrick.

Patrick said hello.

“Boris is from Siberia,” Pastor Lars said. “He’s helping the Soviets improve their petrol production there.”

“Siberia is the really cold place in north Russia, right?” Patrick asked.

“Yes,” Pastor Lars said. “But Boris didn’t always live there. His parents got married in this church. His father was the caretaker. His family’s roots are in this region.”

“So he’s here protecting the garden in honor of his dad.” Patrick said.

“Yes, he cares for the flowers,” Pastor Lars said, grinning. “But he is also here for something else.” The pastor’s mouth split into a smile as wide as a banana turned sideways. “For

Bibles! God gave Boris a vision. God told him he could get fifteen Bibles at this church *today*!"

Patrick felt goose bumps on his back. God was organizing who would get the Bibles in Pastor Lars's van. Patrick took the man's hand and shook it.

"Let's go get those Bibles!" Patrick said.

Pastor Lars put a hand on Patrick's shoulder. "That's the tricky part," the pastor said. "We have to wait till dark. Getting them out will take more than an hour. We can't let anyone see us."

Patrick's excitement faded. "What about Beth?" he asked.

"We'll get to Moscow in God's time . . ." Pastor Lars said.

Patrick finished the sentence: "Not a second too late or a second too early." But he was still nervous. He hoped Beth was okay.

Patrick and the pastor waved goodbye to Boris. They left the church.

"Boris makes good money in the oil business. He gave me enough money for the rest of my trip," Pastor Lars told Patrick as he drove. "Luke 10:4."

Pastor Lars purchased gas and food at the closest service station. After that, he pulled the van into a campground near a river.

The guard at the entrance collected their passports. He pointed to the place where Westerners had to park.

The two Bible smugglers ate rolls, cucumbers, and cheese inside the van. They looked out over a river. Elm trees gave them shade. Patrick felt content and happy.

"What do we do now?" Patrick asked.

"We act like tourists till it's dark," Pastor Lars said. Then he reached over and turned on the radio.

The motorcycle whizzed past tall buildings. It crossed a river and several train tracks. The streets were six lanes wide. Buses stopped and picked up groups of passengers. Beth thought the cars looked newer. She hoped they were finally in Moscow.

One of the buildings looked like a medieval castle. It had

red turrets and towers capped with gold crowns. Another beautiful building had several fat domes painted in bright, swirling stripes.

The motorcycle moved along on brick streets.

They came to stop outside a building made from red and black blocks of stone. It was shaped like an Egyptian step pyramid. Uniformed guards stood in front of the entrance.

"This area is called Red Square," the escort said. "That is Lenin's tomb right in the middle of the square," he said. "He died in 1924."

Beth's cheeks burned red. *I guess that's why he was laughing earlier. Obviously Vladimir Lenin did not sign my visa,* she thought.

The KGB agent revved the engine. Then they drove away from Red Square.

They stopped again a few minutes later. Beth studied the building. It looked as if it were made of gigantic cement LEGOs. Windows were embedded in the concrete wings that jutted every which way.

The KGB agent helped her out of the motorcycle passenger sidecar. Beth grabbed the newspaper and folded it underneath her arm. Then they walked up the front steps.

Beth stepped inside and looked around. The office fixtures and furniture were made of glass, chrome, and glossy black leather. Black and white tiles covered the floor. And people were everywhere. Men and women in business suits hurried down hallways or stopped and handed each other folders.

A striking woman walked gracefully down a flight of stairs. She had the posture and confidence of an empress. Two men in black suits, white shirts, and narrow black ties followed her.

"Amelia," Beth whispered.

Amelia was wearing a metallic-looking silver jumpsuit. A large red and bronze emblem was over her heart.

Amelia rushed down the last few stairs. "Elizabeth, my dearest friend!" she said to Beth. Her voice was loud so everyone could hear. "How lovely to see you." The words echoed in the open area. She embraced Beth in a tight hug.

Beth gritted her teeth. “Don’t call me your ‘dearest friend,’” she said.

Amelia whispered in Beth’s ear, “You’re the one who invaded my program. I think it’s because you secretly admire me.”

“I came to find out what you’re doing with the Imagination Station,” Beth said. “Why are *you* in the USSR? They were an enemy of the United States.”

“Hush,” Amelia whispered. “Don’t say a word till we talk in private.”

Amelia linked elbows with Beth. They hurried up the stairs. The men in dark suits followed.

Are they bodyguards? Beth wondered. *Or are they jailers, keeping Amelia in their sight?*

They went down a hallway and made three right turns. The final hallway had only one door.

Amelia took a set of keys out of her pocket. She unlocked the door and opened it. Amelia waved to the guards after they stepped inside. “Toodle-oo,” she said to them and then slammed the door shut.

Amelia hurried to a glass table. It was covered with papers and office supplies. She picked up a pencil and wrote a note: *This room is bugged. Don’t say anything more about the Imagination Station. And keep quiet about John Whittaker, too.*

Amelia pointed to a light fixture hanging from the ceiling.

Is a microphone hidden in the light fixture? Beth wondered.

“I can say anything I want to about Mr. Whittaker!” Beth said in a loud voice. “And I want to leave.”

Amelia sighed and rolled her eyes. “Of course you can say whatever you want, dear.” Amelia said. She lifted her chin so she was talking to the light fixture. “We can talk openly here in the National Science Board headquarters. You are not a prisoner but a guest. You may leave anytime.” Amelia waved her hand toward the door. “Just tell those KGB agents outside that you want to go back to your friends.”

“But I don’t know where they are,” Beth said.

“Pity,” Amelia said, and she smiled. But her smile didn’t have any pity in it. It looked mean.

Beth reached her hand in her pocket and fingered the remote control for the Imagination Station. “Maybe I’ll just leave the same way I arrived here.”

Amelia seemed amused. She smothered a smile with her hand. Her mouth shaped the word *no*. She wrote on the pad. *The dogs will die unless you help them.*

Dogs? Beth wondered. *What is she talking about? What dogs?*

10

Amelia

Amelia spoke toward the microphone in the light fixture again. She said, “I can offer you a job. But first you have to tell me how you talk to animals. The Soviets are keen to know. They will pay you for the information.”

Beth and Patrick had used translation devices during previous adventures in the Imagination Station. Once she had translated foreign languages for Ferdinand Magellan. She had also talked to creatures coming to Noah’s ark. And Patrick had talked to some smart sled dogs during an adventure in Alaska. But the Imagination Station hadn’t given her a translation device on this trip. And she wasn’t going to let Amelia know about them.

She decided not to answer Amelia’s question or communicate with Amelia by writing notes. “What dogs are you talking about?” she asked.

“The space program’s dogs live in the basement,” Amelia whispered. “I have seen you work with animals before. You could help the space program too. That’s why I had the KGB agent bring you here.”

Working with space program dogs seemed exciting. “What would I have to do?” Beth asked.

“Teach the dogs to push buttons when lights flash. They will go into space on test runs.”

Beth crossed her arms. “Will the dogs be safe?”

Amelia put her hand lightly on Beth’s shoulder. “Details, details,” she said. “No sacrifice is too great if it advances science.” Amelia squeezed Beth’s shoulder. “You need to toughen up.”

Beth didn’t want to be tough if that meant being heartless. She brushed Amelia’s hand away. “Maybe I’ll just leave now,” Beth said. She reached into her pocket for the Imagination Station remote control. As she pulled it out, the odd-shaped object came out too.

Amelia suddenly gasped and clapped her hand over her mouth.

Her movements startled Beth. She dropped the object. It hit the floor with a crack.

Beth lunged for it. But Amelia was faster. The scientist snatched up the showerhead-like item.

“My coaxial fuel mixer,” Amelia said.

Coaxial? Beth had never heard that word.

Amelia pointed the fuel mixer at Beth and said, “*You* had it all along. I thought it got lost in the transport. Lots of things have gone wrong with this program. I think it’s because you followed me.”

Amelia raised the fuel mixer above her head. She did a little dance and waved the object in the air.

“What’s it for?” Beth asked.

“I can improve the rocket fuel mix with this,” Amelia said. “This part will make my rocket go faster and stay in orbit longer. Now the Soviet leaders will see I’ve earned the right to be the first person to orbit the earth!”

So that’s why Amelia is here, Beth thought. *Once again, she wants to get glory for herself.*

Night fell. Patrick looked out the window. The moon reflected

on the river. A silver fish leaped out of the water. It flipped and landed with a splash. Lightning bugs dashed about. Everything seemed peaceful.

Pastor Lars turned off the radio. He drew the orange curtains across the small side windows. He covered the windshield with a sunshade. Now only the two side windows in the front of the van were unblocked.

The pastor said, “I need you to watch out your window. Tell me if anyone is coming.”

Patrick peeked out the passenger-side window. The guards stood under lights closer to the street. One had a flashlight and shined it at the van.

“Duck,” Patrick said.

Pastor Lars lay across the backseat. Patrick slumped low in the seat and lowered his head.

The orange curtains blocked most of the flashlight’s beam.

“Hopefully they will think we’re sleeping,” Patrick said.

Patrick waited a few minutes. The flashlight beam did not return. He sat up and peeked out the window. “All clear,” he whispered to the pastor.

Patrick heard noises coming from behind him. There were clicks and the sound of things sliding. He turned around and strained to see in the dark. He could just see past the curtain of wood beads.

Pastor Lars had taken the inside roof panel off. Rows of books wrapped in brown paper were taped to the ceiling. Pastor Lars peeled a strip of tape off. Several bags fell into his waiting hands. He put the books in a suitcase.

How quickly the pastor moved in the dark!

“Keep watch now,” the pastor said. “No one can see this panel down. I’ve got to get it back up.”

Suddenly there was a tap on Patrick’s window. He turned to look into the bright beam of a flashlight.

Beth wished Patrick were there to help her. She didn’t know what to do. And she wanted to leave the National Science Board building.

“I’m going to summon the Imagination Station,” Beth said.

Amelia shrugged. “I told you not to talk about that. When things go bad for you, remember I warned you.”

The Imagination Station remote was still in Beth’s hand. She pressed the button three times.

Beth listened for a hum. Nothing.

She pressed the button once again. Then a second and third time.

Amelia’s laugh rippled through the room. “I changed the frequency for the Imagination Stations,” she said. “Your remote will work only when I want the machines linked.”

Beth’s heart sank and her mouth went dry. Amelia grabbed the remote out of Beth’s hand. She put it inside her silver jumpsuit’s belt.

She said, “So, you’re stuck here. That will teach John Whittaker to tinker with my inventions.”

“They are not *your* inventions,” Beth said. “Mr. Whittaker built them.”

Suddenly the door burst open. Four uniformed guards came in, rifles at the ready. The two bodyguards in suits followed them.

One bodyguard shouted something in Russian.

Amelia shouted back, “*Nyet! Nyet! Nyet!*”

Two armed guards took Amelia and put her hands behind her back.

Amelia was handcuffed; her hands couldn’t move. But her lips could. She shouted more words in Russian.

Beth backed away from the men. She kept the glass table between them. “What’s going on?” Beth asked.

A guard answered, but he spoke in Russian.

“These Soviet buffoons are arresting us!” Amelia said. “Don’t tell them anything!”

Agent John Whittaker

The flashlight beam turned off. Patrick blinked. “Mr. Whittaker?” he said. “You’re joining this adventure?”

Whit opened the door. “Sorry about the light in your face,” he said. “I had to make sure it was you. We have to hurry and leave,” he said.

“Why?” Patrick said.

“The police are on the way. You and Pastor Lars turned in your passports, and you were tracked. The KGB wants to bring you in for questioning.”

Pastor Lars parted the beads. His head came into view. “I hear a familiar voice!” he said. “Do you have anything to say besides bad news?”

“There’s no time for chatting, my friend,” Whit said. “The Bibles have to move! Now!”

Patrick didn’t know how Whit was involved with the smuggling. But he did know the Bibles were important.

Whit climbed into the driver’s seat. He turned the key that was hanging in the ignition. He shifted the van into gear and pressed the gas pedal.

The van sped past the other campground sites. It whizzed past guards who were smoking cigarettes in the parking lot. It zoomed onto the expressway. Whit drove it so fast the VW bus's engine whined and the vehicle vibrated.

Patrick's teeth banged together because the van shook so much.

Whit pulled around a corner and drove off the road. He parked the van in a grove of trees. "The van is hidden here," he said.

Pastor Lars stuck his head through the beads. "Why are we stopping?"

"I made a plan with Boris," Whit said. "I'm leaving his Bibles here. We need to get to Moscow."

Patrick helped Pastor Lars get the Bibles out of the suitcase. He carried them carefully in a stack, his chin resting on the top to keep the Bibles from slipping. He followed Whit into the forest.

Whit stopped at a thick, dead oak tree that had fallen. He lifted up a portion of the bark. A plastic box was now visible.

Patrick and Pastor Lars put the Russian Bibles in the box one by one.

Patrick quickly flipped through one of the Bibles. The paper was thinner than any he'd ever felt before. It felt as thin as a fly's wing. The letters of the strange alphabet were small but crisp. He placed it inside the plastic container.

Whit replaced the bark on top.

Pastor Lars placed a hand on the bark. He raised the other one to the sky. "Lord, protect these Bibles. Keep them safe, away from the hands of those who would destroy them. Let these words warm the souls of the believers in Siberia. Let your Word fill them with hope. Amen."

Pastor Lars hugged Whit briefly. "Thank you for returning," Pastor Lars said. "Do you have plans for Bible drops in Moscow?"

"Tomorrow is Easter. We'll still be able to make the drops at the appointed places. But we'll have to drive all night to meet Mr. Lev—" Whit stopped talking and looked at Patrick.

"I know," Patrick said. "It's not his real name. If I'm

questioned, I can't tell anybody anything."

Whit gave Patrick a smile filled with approval. "You've learned a lot already," Whit said. "Lev means lion in Russian. These Christians are the bravest people I know."

The three smugglers got in the van. Whit settled into the driver's seat again. "You take a nap, Lars," Whit said to the pastor. "I'll drive first. Then you can take over in a few hours."

Pastor Lars sat on the backseat. He leaned his head against the window and closed his eyes.

Whit started the van and drove onto the road.

Patrick told Whit about Beth's special red passport and the KGB escort. "How will we find Beth?" he asked. "What happened to her?"

"I'm sure Amelia is behind it all," Mr. Whittaker said. "We need to get to Moscow for two reasons. First, to deliver Bibles before Pastor Lars gets arrested for having them."

"And the second?" Patrick said.

"To find Amelia before she gets Beth—and herself—into trouble."

Patrick pulled the little round pin out of his pocket. He fastened it on his blazer's lapel.

"Where did you find that?" Whit asked. "Did the Imagination Station give it to you?"

Patrick nodded. "It's cool. What is it?"

"It's leftover from a government assignment," Whit said. "I think I know what happened. Two adventures are merged into one. That button is from Amelia's satellite launch. I connected that pin to it. It works as a transmitter."

"What does it transmit?" Patrick asked.

"Information to the Imagination Stations and my workshop," Whit said. "But we don't need it now. We have other things to worry about."

Patrick took off the pin and studied it. He discovered a little button on the side. *What will happen if I push that button?*

he wondered.

The group of guards separated Beth and Amelia right away.

Two guards took Beth to an elevator. They rode down four floors. She was escorted to a windowless room. It was painted bright white.

A man was waiting for her inside. “Please,” he said, “call me Mr. Kozlov.”

Beth sat down in a metal folding chair. The chair was cold. The room was cold. Mr. Kozlov’s expression was cold.

“Is Mr. Kozlov your real name?” Beth asked.

Mr. Kozlov shrugged narrow shoulders. “Is Elizabeth *your* real name?”

She shrugged.

Mr. Kozlov tossed her passport on the table. It landed next to the coaxial fuel mixer.

“Where is John Avery Whittaker?” Mr. Kozlov asked. He used the *v* sound instead of the *w* sound in Whittaker. *Vittaker*. “We know he made that fake passport for you.”

“He didn’t make a fake,” Beth said. “I am a citizen of the United States. I was born there.” She didn’t say “in the next century.”

Mr. Kozlov put a photo on the table. In the background was the black-and-red pyramid of Lenin’s Tomb. A man was handing Amelia a package. Beth could tell the man was Whit, but his face wasn’t showing.

“Where is John Avery Whittaker?” Mr. Kozlov asked.

“He was in our country the last time I saw him,” Beth said. “We live in the town of Odyssey.”

“Our agent took this photo two days ago.”

Whit has already been here? Beth thought.

“Tell me what you know about Amelia Darling,” the man said.

“We met in Alaska,” Beth said. “In the winter.” She didn’t say “in the winter of 1925 before Alaska was even a state.”

“Amelia is a brilliant scientist and an excellent airplane pilot,” Beth added. “She has nerves of steel. She wants to be

the ‘first’ in everything. She wants to be famous.”

“Is she a loyal Soviet?”

Beth had to think about this answer. “Well, Amelia is very loyal to herself. So maybe today she is loyal to the Soviets, to you. She wants to be the first cosmonaut.”

Mr. Kozlov snickered at her comment. Then he pointed to the coaxial fuel mixer. “Do you know what that is?” he asked.

Beth shook her head. “Looks like a showerhead.”

“But you brought it here?”

“Well, sort of,” Beth said. “I found it. I didn’t know what it was.”

“And you delivered it to Miss Darling.” Mr. Kozlov wasn’t asking a question.

“That’s not how it happened,” Beth said. “Amelia saw it and just took it.”

Mr. Kozlov shook his head. “I think you are lying. I think Mr. John Whittaker gave it to you. Your job was to bring it to Amelia Darling. You are a pawn in their spy game to ruin our space program.”

“I am not a spy,” Beth said. She looked up at the ceiling. A light fixture shone overhead. She wondered if this room was bugged too. “Besides, Amelia is going to use this thing to improve your rocket ship. She wants to help you get new technology.”

Mr. Kozlov didn't acknowledge her answer. He took the coaxial fuel mixer to the door. He opened it and gave the rocket part to someone outside.

Then he came back to the table. "May I have some water, please?" Beth asked.

"No."

"May I have something to eat, please?"

"No."

"May I go to sleep now? It's the middle of the night."

"Yes, that's fine." The KGB agent stood and left the room.

Beth folded her arms and laid them on the table. She rested her head on her arms. Then she fell asleep.

She awoke sometime later to a knocking sound on the table. Mr. Kozlov was back in the room. "We will allow you and Miss Darling to go now. Something urgent has come up."

Mr. Kozlov rushed out the door.

Beth was left in the empty room all alone. Her passport

was still on the table. She picked it up and put it in her pocket. She then stepped into the hallway.

She walked past three doors. A noise came from inside one of the rooms. Beth had heard sounds like that before. It was a dog's paw scratching to get out.

Then she heard a voice shout, "Like I said, I know it says 'Made in the USA' on it. But it isn't going to ruin your rocket. I 'borrowed' the technology from American scientists. This part will help your rocket!"

St. Basil's Museum

Beth stood at the door and listened. But she couldn't hear anything more except whining dogs.

She quickly walked to the elevator and rode to the main level. The lobby was empty, and she hurried to the door. Outside, the sun was peeking over the buildings of the city.

Beth got to the sidewalk and looked around. She headed toward a tall, red tower with a clock at one end of Red Square. The thin hands pointed straight up and down. A moment later, the clock struck six times. The sound was low yet joyful.

Clang. Clang. Clang. Clang. Clang. Clang.

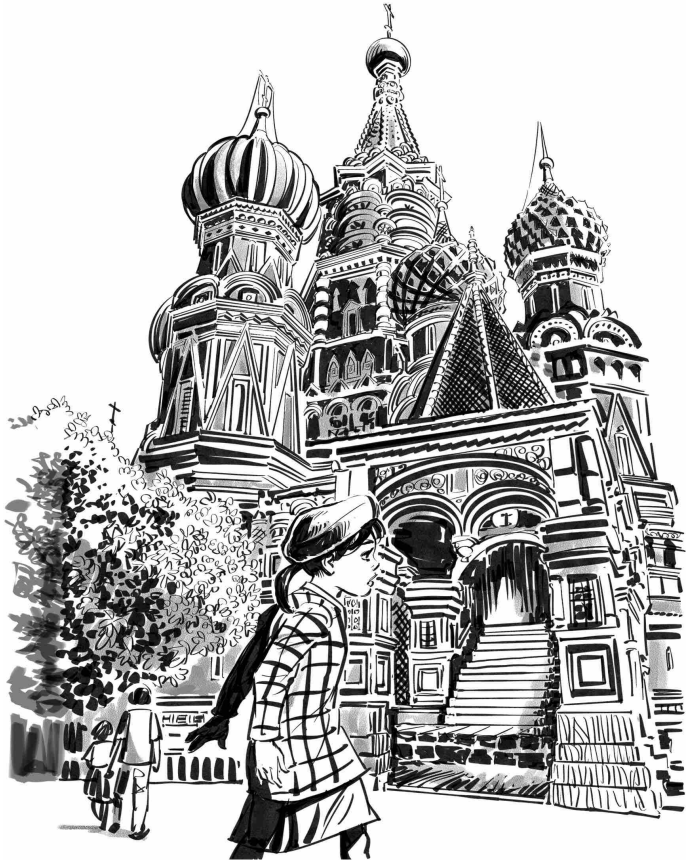
Pigeons and crows lingered on every tower ledge and rooftop. A man pushed a wide broom over the gray stone road. He wore a black coat and fuzzy fur hat.

Guards walked along the wall near the clock tower.

A few cars zoomed down the wide street.

Beth's stomach growled, and she was sleepy. She looked around and decided to head to the colorful building with the plump domes. It sat alone, an island surrounded by bricks

instead of water.



She walked up the long drive and up some stairs. The long walkway had pink and white flowers on a vine painted all over it. A painting hung up high on one tower. It showed a group of religious images. Everyone had gold halos painted around their heads.

This seems to be a church! she thought. *I wonder if there's an Easter service today.*

Beth came to a carved wooden door. She pushed and pulled on the door handle, but it wouldn't open.

She made a fist and pounded on the door.

No one answered. *Is a church really a church if it's not open on Easter?* she wondered.

She pressed her back against the door and slid down to a sitting position. She sat praying and hoping she would know what to do. This adventure seemed odd. So many different pieces. She could feel something was wrong.

Suddenly the door opened with a creak, and she almost fell backward.

A small, young woman with a white cloth head covering stood above her. She held a mop in one hand.

Beth scrambled to her feet. "Hello," she said. "Do you speak English?"

The woman said slowly, "No Eeng-leesh." Then she smiled and pointed at Beth's clothes. "Groovy?" the woman said.

Beth laughed. She hoped this woman could tell her how to find Christians this morning. She made the motion of praying by folding her hands.

The woman shook her head. "No," she said. She sounded a bit afraid.

She reached toward a little wood table just inside the doorway. She handed Beth a brochure.

Beth unfolded it. It had a floor plan and some lists and times. "Museum?" she asked. She handed the brochure back.

"*Muzey*," the woman said, nodding her covered head and taking the paper.

Beth made the motion of prayer again.

The woman's eyes bulged in fear. She shook her head and held up the mop pole as a defense. Then she closed the door.

Beth shrugged and walked a few steps down. She stopped when she got to the painting. One of the images showed a man who looked like Jesus walking on water during a storm.

"What am I to do, Lord?" she prayed while admiring the artwork. "I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I'll go anywhere you want me to. Just tell me where."

A gust of wind rushed down the walkway, rippling her blazer. She felt cold. A clicking noise and a creak came from behind her. She turned and saw a piece of paper on the ground. She went back to the door and bent to pick it up. But the wind blasted again, and Beth had to chase it. She trapped the paper with her foot. She picked it up. It was the same brochure, but this time it had handwriting on it:

не возвращайся
пожалуйста

What does this say? Beth wondered.

She tucked the paper into her blazer pocket and headed back to Red Square.

Now even more guards walked in front of the clock tower.

She waved to them as she passed. They didn't wave back.

When she got to the gray brick road, three medium-sized dogs rushed past her. She stepped back quickly.

Amelia was chasing them. She had changed into everyday clothes, and she carried a small duffel bag. She shouted at the dogs in Russian, waving her arms wildly.

The scientist slowed to a stop when she saw Beth. "Don't just stand there," Amelia said. "Help me get those dogs away from here."

13

Amelia Again

The van drove all night. Whit pulled the van over at a gas station at daybreak. Whit and Patrick got out. Whit showed his passport to the clerk inside a tiny building. He paid for gas and bought several food items.

After Patrick helped pump gas, he got back into the VW. Whit put the food in the tiny refrigerator in back.

Patrick grabbed a paper map of the Moscow area. He held the large map on his lap. His finger was on the thick line for the main highway. It went northeast.

Whit closed the van's back door and got into the driver's seat. He leaned over and studied the map.

"The pastor lives in an apartment complex," he said. "It's just off Red Square on Gorky Street." He put his index finger on the map.

"See how the streets form a circle?" Whit asked.

Patrick nodded.

"Inside the oval is Red Square," Whit said. "It's the heart of the city and the Soviet headquarters."

Patrick looked at the map's legend. He did some math in

his head. “We’ve got only five kilometers to go,” he said.

Pastor Lars had been sleeping in the backseat. He sat up and stretched his arms. He rustled the beads hanging behind the front seats.

“Let’s have some music!” Pastor Lars said. “It’s Easter Sunday, after all.”

Patrick flipped on the radio. He searched for music by twisting a knob. But there was nothing on the Soviet radio stations that sounded like hymns.

Whit turned off the radio. “Let’s sing our own songs.”

Pastor Lars began singing a song Patrick recognized. “Hallelujah! Hallelujah!” the pastor sang. Whit joined in. The two men sang with gusto about Jesus and His reign “forever and ever.”

They arrived at a city. Whit parked the van at the curb. It was in front of a long, five-story building with many windows. The building had tiles that formed colorful art at the top. On the bottom floor were shops and restaurants.

“This is the Hotel Metropole,” Whit said. “Hopefully the police won’t notice the van here. A lot of tourists stay here.”

Patrick helped Pastor Lars put Bibles inside his violin case. Whit led the way across a wide street. He was holding the brown sack with food in it.

A tower clock chimed once in the distance. Patrick glanced at the Roman numbers on the clock face. It was six thirty.

The dogs panted and seemed to be enjoying this game of chase.

Beth looked at Amelia. “I won’t help you,” she said, “unless you read this to me.” She held out the brochure.

Amelia took the paper. “It says, ‘Visitor’s Guide to the St. Basil’s Museum.’”

“The part written in pencil,” Beth said.

Amelia scrunched her nose and studied the paper. “That’s an address for one of those enormous apartment buildings,” she said. “Four Gorky Street.” She handed the brochure back.

“Now help me get the dogs away from here.”

“Why?” Beth asked.

“Because the Soviets are planning on sending one of them into space,” Amelia said.

To Beth, the dogs looked like healthy, happy mutts. She gulped. Death was a high price to pay for science, even if it was just the death of a dog.

“You’re getting soft too,” Beth said to Amelia. “You care about them, and you’re going to save them. Like Noah saving the animals on the ark.”

Amelia flushed. And just then, one dog sat at her feet. It licked her hand.

“I’m not getting soft,” she said, yanking her hand away. “But the Soviets won’t let me orbit the earth. So I’m leaving and I’m taking these dogs away from here.” She lifted her bag. “I had to empty my desk out.”

Another of the dogs whined as if it wanted to be petted.

“Shoo!” Beth shouted at it. She waved her hands. “Go away. Find a new home.” But it just sat there with its tongue hanging out.

“Why do you want to go to Gorky Street?” Amelia asked.

Beth was silent. She didn’t know what the address meant. But it might be where a church group met. She didn’t want to tell Amelia that.

“You’re keeping a secret!” Amelia said. “I bet it’s something to do with that Bible smuggling. Whit is always doing something like that. At least when he’s not ruining *my* programs.”

“Why don’t you just leave me alone?” Beth asked. “Go back home.”

“I’ll go home when I feel like it,” Amelia said. “Maybe after the dogs find new homes. Maybe the people who live on Gorky Street will take the dogs. Plus, you’ll find the building faster with my help. I can read the street signs.”

Amelia spoke to dogs in Russian. They heeled beside her quietly.

“How do you know Russian?” Beth asked.

Amelia rolled her eyes. “I speak seven languages,” she

said. “Now follow me.” She headed down the road.

Beth walked beside her and the dogs. Beth’s stomach growled.

“Where can I get something to eat?” Beth asked.

“Blech,” Amelia said and scowled. “Soviet food is boring. I’d rather have my chef prepare healthy food for me.”

Beth eyed the bag Amelia carried. *Could a working remote be inside that bag?* she wondered.

Suddenly she heard a familiar voice.

“Beth!” Patrick called.

Beth turned around. She ran toward them and shouted, “Patrick! Pastor Lars! Mr. Whittaker!”

The friends greeted each other on the sidewalk.

Whit had a paper bag in his hands. Pastor Lars carried his violin case.

Amelia joined the group.

“Who is this?” Pastor Lars asked, nodding toward Amelia. “And where did those dogs come from?”

“The dogs need a home,” Beth said to the pastor. “And this is Amelia. She’s the one we were looking for. She wants to go into space.”

Pastor Lars and Amelia introduced themselves.

“Is that violin case hiding a weapon?” Amelia asked.

“Of course not,” Pastor Lars said. “I’m a man of peace.” Pastor Lars studied Amelia. “You’re a cosmonaut?” he asked.

Something told Patrick that he should hide the transmitter pin from Amelia. He unhooked the pin and slipped the odd little device into his pocket.

“I quit the cosmonaut program this morning,” Amelia said. “I’m just an ordinary tourist now.”

There was a long, awkward pause. It was obvious that neither the two cousins nor the two men trusted Amelia. The government scientist shifted her duffel bag to her other shoulder in a nervous gesture.

A uniformed guard approached. He was marching stiffly, like a tin soldier come to life. He carried his rifle using the

palm of his hand. It leaned against his shoulder, the muzzle pointed at the sky.

Everyone was quiet, even Amelia, as the guard walked near.

Can Amelia be trusted? Patrick wondered. *Will she turn us all in? Pastor Lars has Bibles in his violin case. Is he safe?*

The guard passed. He didn't seem interested in them at all.

Whit raised his head and looked around Red Square. He seemed worried.

"Amelia," Whit said, "it's very odd that you're still here. Shouldn't you be on your way home?"

"How odd that you are here following me," Amelia said back. "You're the one who should go home." She put her hands on her hips. "This is *my* program."

She pointed at Patrick and Beth and said, "Beth got me fired by bringing that fuel mixer." She motioned toward Pastor Lars. "And what is this pastor doing here?"

Whit turned to Beth. "Maybe you and Patrick should let me talk to Amelia alone. But first you should have something to eat." He handed Beth the brown sack.

"Thank you!" she said. "I haven't eaten in ages." She took a sandwich out of the bag. She glanced at Amelia. "Mr. Kozlov and the other KBG agents weren't very good hosts."

Pastor Lars and Whit both said, "KGB?" at the same time.

"Yes," Beth said. She swallowed a bite. "They questioned me at the science building. Eventually they believed that I wasn't a spy."

Whit glared at Amelia. "Why are the KGB involved?" he asked her.

Amelia shrugged. "There's nothing to tell. I've been fired from the space program. The KGB agents now think I'm working with you."

"That's right," Beth said to Whit. "Everything was fine until I mentioned your name."

Whit put a hand on Patrick's shoulder and whispered in his ear, "Take Beth back to the van and wait there."

Patrick nodded and turned to say goodbye to Pastor Lars. But the man had already vanished with his violin case.

“That’s why they call him the Musical Ghost,” Beth said. “He’s never been caught.”

The two cousins hurried away from the clock tower. Patrick looked over his shoulder.

Whit and Amelia were talking. Amelia waved her arms. The dogs barked and ran around in circles.

Suddenly Amelia shouted something in Russian. And a guard started running toward them.

4 Gorky Street

Beth didn't want the guard to see them. She took Patrick's arm and turned him toward a small group of trees. "Let's go," she said.

"Wait," he said, "I want to see what happens to Whit!"

The cousins looked back. Whit was hurrying toward a large, castle-like building. Amelia was left with the dogs. She was talking to the guard and pointing toward Whit.

Just then the tower clock struck seven.

Clang. Clang. Clang. Clang. Clang. Clang. Clang.

"Whit said to go to the van," Patrick said. "Let's go back there and wait for him. It's not far."

The cousins walked through Red Square, away from Lenin's tomb and its guards. They hurried past two more beautiful old buildings with domes.

They look like churches that the government has shut down, Beth thought. *The Soviets sure know how to ruin Easter.*

They crossed the wide street at the crosswalk. They walked along the sidewalk crowded with people now shopping. Finally, Patrick stopped them at a large, long

building.

"It that a hotel?" Beth asked.

"Yes," Patrick said. "But I don't think we can stay there."

"Why?" Beth asked.

Patrick steered her away.

"The van," he said. "It's being towed."

A red tow truck was pulling away from the curb. The van was chained to it. Two police cars rolled down the street after it.

"Oh no! They'll find the Bibles," Beth said.

"And arrest Pastor Lars," Patrick said.

"If they can find the guy," Pastor Lars said from behind them.

Patrick turned around. "You really are like a ghost," he said to Pastor Lars. "You come and go so silently."

"I'm sorry about your VW bus," Beth said. "Can you get it back?"

Pastor Lars said, "Not without a miracle. I don't have my passport. The police will almost certainly find Bibles inside. I'll be arrested if they find me."

Patrick felt uneasy. He didn't have his passport anymore either. Would he be arrested?

"Is your violin inside the van?" Beth asked.

Pastor Lars nodded. "It is, and I will miss it. But I have God's music in my heart." He put a hand over his heart and smiled. Then he said, "Let's go to Gorky Street and find Mr. Lev. I can still deliver the Bibles in the violin case."

Beth spoke up. "A woman at St. Basil's gave me an address. I think it's where some Christians are today. It's at 4 Gorky Street."

Pastor Lars looked at a nearby road sign. "I think I can read enough Russian to follow the street signs."

They found the building on a busy street corner. The apartment stretched a full block. Dozens of windows on all four floors dotted the side of the building.

Which apartment is Mr. Lev's? Patrick wondered.

“My mom wouldn’t be happy with me,” Patrick said, “but we need to play ding-dong ditch.”

“What?” Beth said. “I don’t want to play games.”

“Remember the code from the Volkovs’ house?” he asked. He knocked on the hood of a nearby car.

Tap, tap, tappity tap.

“Maybe the Christians here know it too,” Beth said. “We can tap on each door. Then we can see if we get the safe answer back.”

“What do we do if someone answers the door without tappity tapping back?” Patrick asked.

“I know a bit of Russian,” Pastor Lars said. “Just say, ‘*Ne ta dver*.’ That means ‘wrong door.’ They will think you’re just lost.”

The cousins practiced saying the Russian phrase out loud. “*Ne ta dver*,” they repeated. The last word was like saying *diver* without the *i* sound.

Pastor Lars opened the violin case. Inside were several packages wrapped in newspaper. “You each need to take a package of Bibles,” he said. “If I get caught, you can still deliver these. We need to split up.”

Patrick and Beth each selected a package.

“We’ll start on the top floor,” Patrick said. He took a few

steps toward the apartment building. Then he stopped. He turned back to Pastor Lars. “What happens if we do find the right apartment?”

But the Musical Ghost was gone again.

Beth raised her hand to knock at the first apartment on the fourth floor. Her hand shook as she tap, tap, tappity tapped on the door.

The door flew open. A short man in a gray sweater and slacks stood there. Beth could see inside the small apartment. Three young children in pajamas sat on a blue rug playing with blocks. A woman with a red scarf on her head stared at Beth.

Patrick mumbled, “*Ne ta dver*.”

The man slammed the door shut.

Beth counted each door as she tapped the secret code. Forty-six tap, tap, tappity taps. Forty-six slams. The Soviet families didn’t seem to be happy folks.

She and Patrick took the stairwell down to the third floor. Beth raised her hand to tap at the eighth door. Patrick suddenly grabbed her wrist.

“Look,” he said. He pointed to the doorframe. Someone had etched a lion’s head into the dull yellow paint. The image was faint, but it definitely was a lion.

“Mr. Lev means Mr. *Lion*,” Patrick said.

Beth boldly knocked on the door. *Tap, tap, tappity tap*.

She heard some movement from inside. A chair scraping the floor. A cabinet door closing. Footsteps. And then *tap, tap, tappity tap*.

Someone on the inside had returned the safe code knock!

Beth put her hand on the doorknob. She turned the handle and pushed open the door.

A man stood in the doorway. He wore a black suit with a thin tie that was too long. “Hello, Elizabeth,” Mr. Kozlov said. “It’s nice to see you again. I believe your friend is also American.” He looked at Patrick. “May I call you by your first name, Patrick?”

Patrick nodded.

"Where's Mr. Lev?" Beth asked.

"You might say *I* am Mr. Lev," the agent said. "I've been spreading rumors for months to catch John Whittaker. I even spread false safe codes. There are no Christians in Moscow that live at 4 Gorky Street. There is no Mr. Lev."

15

The Handoff

Patrick's heart sank. Beth had mentioned Mr. Kozlov. He was with the KGB.

The agent said, "We've been waiting to talk to your friends, Mr. Lars Spens and John Whittaker." He smiled a cruel smile. "But you two will do . . . for now."

Patrick noticed his accent. He rolled the *r* in *for* and said the *v* sound for the *w* in *will*.

"You'll never catch Pastor Lars or Whit," Patrick said. "They're far too clever."

"And God is watching over them," Beth added.

Amelia appeared from inside the apartment. "Come in," she said. "So sorry I had to set a trap for you. But it's your fault for following me."

"Did the St. Basil's brochure really say 4 Gorky Street?" Beth asked.

Amelia shook her head. "It said, 'Don't come back, please.'" She motioned with her arm. "Don't be foolish. Come in, *now*!"

Patrick and Beth came into the apartment. A duffel bag

with the space emblem was on the floor next to a small couch. It was the one Amelia had been carrying earlier.

Patrick sat on the couch and held his package of Bibles tightly.

Beth sat next to him.

Mr. Kozlov shut the door gently. He put a chain across the door.

Beth asked Amelia, "Why did you do this?"

"So the KGB will let me be a cosmonaut," Amelia said. "I had to prove I was a loyal Soviet. And it's not that we really want to capture *you*. But it would be nice to have John Whittaker learn to mind his own business. He's been interfering with the Soviet satellite program."

Amelia walked into the kitchen. "I'll get you some water and a snack," she said. "We might be waiting a while for Whit to rescue you."

Patrick reached in his pocket for the odd little transmitter pin. He felt the edge with his thumb. The tiny button was waiting for his touch.

He leaned toward Beth and whispered, "Get ready."

He pushed the button.

Patrick heard the familiar hum. The Imagination Station appeared in front of them. The door was already open.

"No!" shouted Amelia. "Not in front of a KGB agent!" She dropped something and it crashed on the kitchen floor.

But Beth and Patrick were off the couch. They threw their packages inside the machine. Then they quickly sat in the Imagination Station's seats.

Their seat belts weren't on. The door wasn't even closed. But Patrick slammed his fist against the red button anyway.

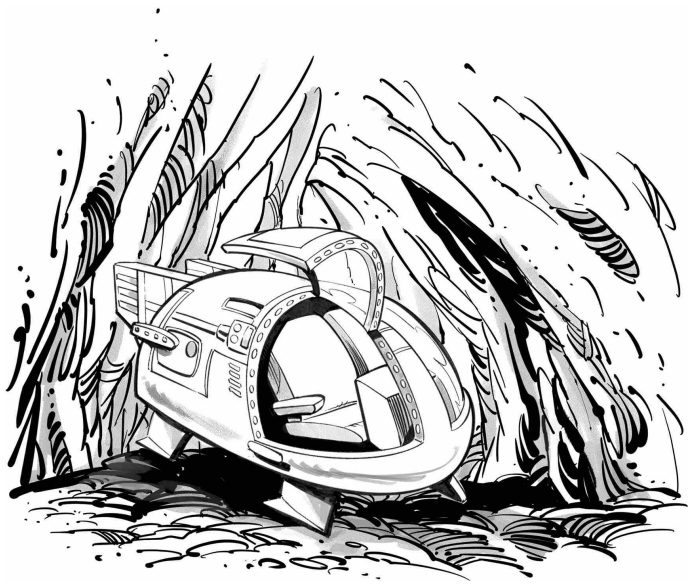
And then everything went black.

Beth felt herself spin out of control. Her body lurched forward with the movement.

Her elbow rammed into the dashboard.

When the Imagination Station stopped, she got out as quickly as she could.

Patrick stepped out of the machine too. But it didn't disappear.



They were in a familiar cave. It had bats on the ceiling. Vines covered the cave opening. It was cold and damp. Water oozed from the walls.

"This feels like England again," Beth said. "That portal cave from one of our first adventures." She felt her head. "My beret is gone."

"It was missing when I saw you and Amelia outside. You were with the dogs near that colorful building with all the domes."

"I must have lost the beret at St. Basil's," Beth said. "It got really windy."

Beth got back inside and sat down in a seat. Their packages of Bibles were still inside. "The Amelia button is flashing green," she said.

Patrick stuck his head inside. "That means Amelia is still in the adventure," Patrick said. He pushed the blinking light. More information popped up on a little screen. It showed Amelia's location. *April 2, 1961, Gorky Street, Moscow.*

"We have to go back," Beth said. "We have to warn Pastor Lars and Mr. Whittaker."

“What if we go back to 4 Gorky Street and look for them?” Patrick said.

“No,” Beth said. “It might put us right back inside the apartment with Mr. Kozlov.” She remembered the picture Mr. Kozlov had shown her. It was of Whit’s back. He had been meeting Amelia in front of Lenin’s tomb. “Let’s go to the middle of Red Square. Whit and Amelia met there once. Maybe he will be there again.”

Patrick shrugged. “Okay,” he said. “We can always walk to Gorky Street again.”

This time the cousins strapped into the machine. Beth pushed some buttons on the dashboard keyboard, trying to figure out how to program the machine’s landing place. She managed to change the location from the portal cave in sixteenth-century England to Moscow, Red Square, April 2, 1961.

Then Patrick pushed the red button.

The cousins stepped out of the Imagination Station into Red Square. The machine vanished immediately.

Amelia’s dogs were chasing birds.

The tower clock began chiming again. Nine clangs.

Patrick clutched his package of Bibles. He said, “You keep a lookout toward St. Basil’s and the department store. I’ll keep a lookout toward the clock tower and the tomb.”

A woman approached Beth from the direction of St. Basil’s museum. She was wearing a beret that looked like the one Beth had lost. “I look for you all morning,” the woman said.

The woman’s English was pretty good. “How did you get my beret?” Beth asked. “Who are you?”

“Names not important,” the woman answered. She moved back a few steps.

Beth had to move closer to her to hear. Patrick moved too.

The woman patted her head. “You left beret at museum,” she said softly. “Cleaning woman was much afraid. She say American girl look for church on Easter. She say you wear blue and pink jacket.”

Beth nodded and said, “I am still looking for Christians.”

“Then come with me,” the woman said. She stepped backward three more steps. “I take you to pastor in town. We meet secretly to worship.”

Patrick didn’t want to follow the woman any farther. She was taking them closer to a group of guards near Lenin’s tomb. He had learned to distrust everyone.

“Can you prove that you’re a Christian,” Patrick said. “We don’t know if you’re working for the KGB.”

“Okay,” the woman said. “I know Bible verse Americans love: ‘God helps those who help themselves.’”

“That’s not a Bible verse,” Beth said. “You’re lying!”

The woman started to cry. “Oh, pity me!” she said. “We have no Bibles for forty years! How can I know Scripture? I have no holy words to read.” She sniffed and pointed at Beth’s package. “Those are Bibles, no? Another American said Bibles coming soon.”

Patrick felt sorry for her. He whispered to Beth, “She must mean Mr. Whittaker.” He touched Beth’s elbow. “Maybe we should give her at least one package.”

Beth looked at Patrick. “Well, just one of them,” she said. “I still want to find the Musical Ghost.”

Just then Patrick thought he heard something odd. It was someone whistling.

He turned to see a man dressed all in dark clothes. His hands were thrust deep inside his pockets. He looked a little scary. But he was whistling a familiar tune.

“That’s ‘The Farmer in the Dell,’” Patrick said.

“He’s got the ‘hi-ho, the derry-o’ part a little off key,” Beth said. “But that’s definitely our song.”

“Let’s follow him,” Patrick said. “He must know the Musical Ghost!”

Patrick felt a hand on his arm. “No go with that man!” the woman in the beret said. She tugged at his arm with great force. “It is trick! Stupid kids! Come with me! I pay you for Bibles. You get rich. Come!”

“Please go away,” he said. “You’re not treating us in the Royal Way.”

The woman scowled and walked away. Patrick wondered if she was going to tell the guards.

The cousins followed the whistling man a short distance across Red Square.

After a while, the man noticed the two young Americans following him. “I know who you are,” he said. “Please give me the Bibles. I will get them to churches. The pastors desperately need God’s Word.”

“How can we tell that you’re not lying?” Patrick said.

“I cannot prove what is inside my heart,” the man said. “But I have risked my life to carry Bibles.” He held out a hand and took off a glove.

Beth gasped in shock.

Three of the man’s fingers were gone.

“I have learned the hard way how to keep a secret,” he said.

Patrick didn’t want to stare at the hand. He looked up and into the man’s eyes. Something told him he could trust this man.

“Here,” Patrick said. “Please be careful.”

Beth also handed the man her package.

“Can you tell us where the Musical Ghost is?” she asked.

The man said, “You may be able to see him before it’s too late.” The man’s voice was sad and flat. It was as if his joy had frozen.

“Where is he?” Patrick asked.

“In jail for bringing in Bibles,” the man said. “He is there along with some American woman.”

“Amelia!” the cousins said aloud at the same time.

The Police Station

Beth asked, “Where is the police station?”

The man in black said, “Go around this building, turn left at the coffee shop, and then left again. The building has two flags. The top one is the red Soviet flag with the hammer, star, and sickle in the corner. The other flag is black with a gold double eagle on it.”

The man stepped out of the alley and was gone.

“Let’s wait a minute before we go to the station,” Beth said. “Let him get away first.”

Patrick peeked around the corner of the building. He gave Beth the thumbs-up signal. Then he walked at a normal pace down the sidewalk. Beth followed.

The cousins were twenty steps away from the alley when someone shouted in Russian.

The cousins turned to see what the shouting was about.

“Look!” Patrick said. “The guards! They are coming this way! I thought that woman would report us.”

Beth and Patrick dashed around the building and turned left. Beth soon saw the flags flying on a pole outside the police

station. She felt torn inside. *Are we moving toward safety or danger?* she wondered.

The guards shouted at them again. The men's voices sounded much closer.

She grabbed hold of the door handle. She pulled hard on the glass door, but it was too heavy. She heard the heavy footfalls of the guards.

Patrick's hands joined hers on the handle. They yanked the heavy door open together.

Inside, they released the door. The shouting was shut out.

Beth looked around. The station was filled with wooden desks. Officers in black uniforms with red and gold trim sat at the desks.

A guard from Lenin's tomb opened the door and marched in. He seemed angry and shouted at Patrick and Beth.

The guard took hold of Patrick's arm.

"Let him go!" Beth said.

A man in a plain black suit stood from a wood bench leaning against the wall.

Mr. Kozlov!

He approached the guard. "Let the boy go."

The guard shook his head. He didn't understand English.

Mr. Kozlov then spoke in Russian. He took something out of his jacket pocket and showed it to the guard. This seemed to make the guard less angry.

The guard said something in Russian. Beth caught the word *Bibliya*. *He did know about the Bibles*, Beth thought.

"Mr. Kozlov must have shown the guard his ID card," Patrick whispered to Beth. "KGB guys outrank the guards."

"Are we under arrest?" Beth asked.

Mr. Kozlov raised a hand. "I work for the space department. They do not worry about religious things. You are not under arrest."

Beth smiled. Relief filled her heart.

"At least not yet," Mr. Kozlov added. "You two disappeared from the apartment. Did Amelia Darling do that? How? Was it mirrors? Some sort of illusion?"

Beth's heart sank.

“I can’t explain what she did,” Beth said. “I’m still in elementary school.” It was technically true. Beth had no idea how the Imagination Stations worked.

Mr. Kozlov stroked his chin.

“Come to her cell with me,” he said. “Perhaps you can persuade Miss Darling to tell the truth. Things will go better for her if she does.”

“What about Pastor Lars?” Patrick asked. “You said you don’t care about Bibles. Can’t you let him go?”

“Aah,” Mr. Kozlov said. “It’s true that *I* don’t care what Mr. Lars Spens has done. But the police do. Come with me and you can speak with him, too.”

Beth thought about the mysterious man and his missing fingers. She remembered Pastor Volkov and his bandaged hands. *Would they torture Pastor Lars?* she wondered. *He could never play a violin again if they hurt his hands.*

Beth exchanged a glance with Patrick. He nodded.

“Okay,” Beth said. “We’ll go with you.”

Mr. Kozlov motioned to a police officer, giving the man orders in Russian. The police officer led them out of the lobby.

The walk to Amelia’s cell felt like a death march to Beth.

She and Patrick dragged their feet as they followed the officer. He led them down long, dark hallways. They passed dozens of metal doors. Each door had a six-by-six-inch grate in it. Prisoners pressed their thin, dirt-streaked faces against the grates and shouted out words in Russian.

The officer ignored the men’s cries. So did Mr. Kozlov. They walked a little farther, and the two men stopped at the end of a hallway. A cardboard box had been left sitting on the floor.

The police officer stood guard outside the last door. His black and red hat covered his face because his head was bent. He seemed to be staring at the floor. One of his black shoes was resting on the cardboard box.

The police officer stepped aside so Beth could look in the cell. She stood on her tiptoes and looked through the metal grate. Tears sprang to her eyes.

Pastor Lars and Amelia were bound. They were wearing

striped prison uniforms and their ankles and wrists had shackles that were bolted to the floor and ceiling.

Amelia said, “Finally, someone to get me out of here.”

Pastor Lars stayed silent. He looked tired. His eyes were closed. He made no effort to look at Beth.

She turned her head away in the direction of the officer. He looked at Beth and winked. She finally got a good look at his face. She bit her lip to keep from gasping.

The police officer was Whit!

Patrick saw the police officer's face. He inhaled deeply. *Why is Mr. Whittaker pretending to be a police officer?* he wondered. *Does Amelia know he's here?*

Mr. Kozlov said, "Miss Darling, please tell us how you made the children disappear."

Amelia said, "You'll have to get me out of here first." She shook the chains on her wrists. "In the laboratory I can build you a . . ." She paused and then said, "I can build you a Disappearing Station. So unlock me."

Mr. Kozlov looked at Patrick and Beth. "Is that true?" he asked. "Can she build a machine that makes people disappear?"

He held their eyes for a long time. Finally Beth nodded. "Amelia *is* very smart," she said. "I think she can probably build anything."

"She should have made herself disappear from here," Mr. Kozlov said with a frown.

Silence filled the hallway and cell.

Patrick perked up and lifted his chin. He had an idea. And having Whit there inside the adventure made him bold. He said, "What have you arrested her for anyway? I don't think making someone disappear into thin air is against the law." He paused and then added, "Holding her in a cell is illegal. She has rights!"

Mr. Kozlov laughed. "This is not the United States," he said. "The Soviet State has a right to protect itself against foreigners. They can be locked up to protect state security."

He scratched his head. "But I suppose there is no law against making something disappear. Still, she needs to tell us how she did it. One second you were in the Gorky Street apartment building. The next you were seen in Red Square. That's . . . *teleporting*."

Patrick looked at Amelia. He knew the fame-seeking scientist would tell the Soviets everything.

Beth seemed to be more worried about Pastor Lars. “Does that box have Pastor Lars’s things in it?” Beth asked.

Whit moved his foot off the box. Beth bent and looked inside. Amelia’s bag was inside along with Pastor Lars’s things. She pulled out a Bible and the violin.

“Is this evidence?” Beth asked.

Mr. Kozlov nodded. “Those were in the van he was driving,” he said. “We have his passport linked to that VW. We have witnesses who saw him preaching and playing the violin to encourage praising God. That box proves he is a Christian.”

Pastor Lars finally said something. “Have love one to another. So said Jesus himself in John 13:35. Love toward others shows that you’re a Christian.”

Whit’s voice still sounded like a police officer’s. “The woman seems to be your main concern,” he said to Mr. Kozlov. “What if Mr. Spens pays a fine? The State could always use funds to promote the Soviet way. I can authorize his release if we collect a fine.”

“Hmm,” Mr. Kozlov said. “It would have to be a large fine. He had several Bibles in the van.” The KGB agent paced. “If he promises to leave, he can pay a fine to me, and I will see that he is released.”

Patrick said, “Done deal!” He unbuckled his belt and opened the belt’s hidden zipper. Bundles of rubles fell to the cement floor.

17

The Cave Again

Beth stayed near the cardboard box. She kept her eye on Amelia's duffel bag.

Mr. Kozlov seemed to be listening to Whit and Patrick. Whit moved his body so he blocked Beth from Mr. Kozlov's view.

She bent and unzipped the duffel bag and plunged her hand inside. She found Amelia's remote for the Imagination Station and slipped it into her pocket.

Then she hurried to help Patrick pick up the rubles. They handed the money to Whit.

"Please don't use that money for me," Pastor Lars said. "Free the woman instead. I am ready to be tortured. I am even ready to die for Christ and meet Him. But this woman would die in her sins. She is not ready for judgment. Her torment would be forever."

Whit unlocked the door to the cell. He entered the small room.

Mr. Kozlov laughed. "Did you hear that, officer?" he said to Whit. "This man is a religious nut. He thinks God will judge

us all."

"Then I guess I'm a religious nut too," Whit said. He unlocked Pastor Lars. "We will *all* meet God one day. And I'm releasing this innocent man."

Beth grabbed Patrick's arm. She showed him Amelia's remote to the Imagination Station. "Try pressing the button on your pin at the same time I press Amelia's remote the third time. Maybe we can all get away from here."

A clanking noise got Beth's attention. She looked toward the cell. Whit had now unlocked Amelia, too. Pastor Lars and Amelia stepped out of the cell.

Amelia rubbed her wrists. "Finally, I get blood flow back to my wrists and ankles."

"What about my money?" Mr. Kozlov asked.

Whit threw some of the rubles inside the cell. Mr. Kozlov went inside to pick it up. Then Whit locked the door behind him.

"Let me out!" Mr. Kozlov said, pounding the door. He pressed his face against the small opening. "I'll have you fired."

"That's okay," Whit said. "I quit." Whit looked directly at Mr. Kozlov.

"You!" Mr. Kozlov shouted. "John Whittaker!"

"The one and only," Whit said. "Now you'll get to see another vanishing act!"

Patrick looked at Beth. He pulled the pin out of his pocket. "Now?" he asked.

Beth smiled. "One, two . . ." She pressed the button two times. Her thumb hovered over the center button of Amelia's remote. "Three!"

Patrick squeezed the pin at the same Beth pressed the button the third time.

A humming noise filled the room.

Both Imagination Stations filled the jail's hallway. The Model T and the one that looked like the cockpit of a helicopter.

Beth jumped into the cockpit. Whit made sure Amelia climbed in the other side. Beth buckled up this time.

Out of the corner of her eye, Beth saw Whit hand the rest of the rubles and the key to Pastor Lars.

Then Whit and Patrick got inside the Model T.

Beth hit the red button.

As the machine rumbled before fading to black, Beth watched Pastor Lars hold up the rubles and wave.

"God's blessing!" he said.

Beth opened her eyes. It was dark, but she could still see. The Imagination Station had brought them back to the portal cave. The air was moist and smelled of wet soil and decaying leaves. A cool breeze rustled the vines covering the opening.

Somehow the cave seemed even older this time. Beth thought the vine branches were thicker, the leaves larger.

Amelia got out and said, "Give me the remote! I want to be a cosmonaut!" She looked around the cave. "Where are we?" She looked back at Beth. "And what are you wearing?"

"Oh, no!" Beth said, looking down at her clothes. "We're going to be . . . *aristocrats*!"

Their clothes *were* very different. Old. European. *Fancy*.

Amelia wore a dress that reached the floor. It had beautiful beads and pearls decorating the fabric. She wore a headdress with cones sticking out from the sides of her head. Long strips of fabric hung from the cones.

Beth looked down. She had on a dress made of thick fabric with gold threads.

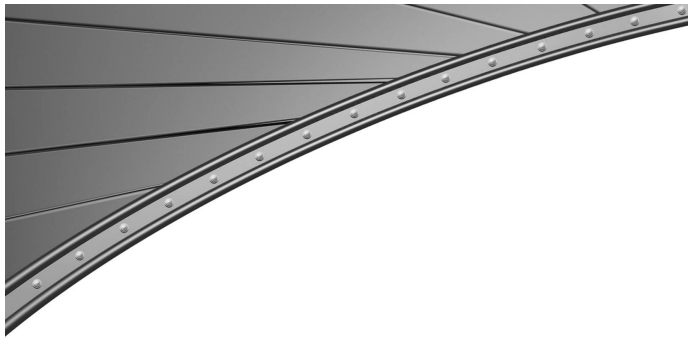
"It looks like we really are in England," Beth said. "This looks like how people dressed during the time of King Henry VIII."

"Well, *we're* here," Amelia said. "But where is Whit? And the boy . . . we need his pin."

Beth stepped toward the back of the cave. She shouted, "Hello?"

There was no answer except the echo of her own voice.

Where are Whit and Patrick? Find out in Imagination Station #32: *Courage at the Castle*. To learn more about this and other Imagination Station adventures, visit TheImaginationStation.com.



Secret Word Puzzle

How Far to Moscow?

Patrick studied a map of the Western USSR to find the route to Moscow in kilometers. Use the map on page 186 to find out how many kilometers Moscow is from key cities and bodies of water. (The cities use the 1961 names, not the modern names.) Next, write the name of each city or body of water on the lines below. Then, match up the numbers to place the boxed letters in order on the blanks to discover the secret word from Revelation 1:3. (The first blank is done for you.)

"_____ are those who hear it and think everything it says is important."

B

(1972) _ _ □ _ _ _ _

(1441) _ □ _ _ _ _ _ _

(996) □_ _ _ _.
_ _ _ _ _

(1082) _ _ _□_ _ _
_ _ _

(459) _ _ _□_

(1089) □_ _ _ _ _ _ _.
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

(957) _□_ _ _

(704) _□_ _ _ _ _ _ _

(715) _ _ _□_

(1332) _□_ _ _

(216) _ _ _ _□_

(248) □_ _ _ _ _ _

(996) □_ _ _ _ _ -
_ _ _

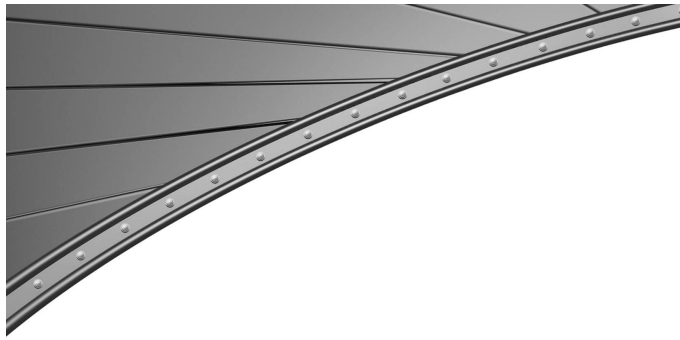
(430) _□_ _ _ _

Go to TheImaginationStation.com.
Find the cover of this book.
Click on "Secret Word."
Type in the correct answer,
and you'll receive a prize.

USSR
Helsinki, Finland (1089)
Leningrad (704)
Rostov (216)
Moscow
Kirov (957)
Gorky (459)
Minsk (715)
Seltso (430)
Brest, Poland (996)
Saratov (848)
Arol Sea (1972)
Odesa (1332)
Stalingrad (996)
Black Sea (1441)
Caspian Sea (1082)

Features on the Map

	Spelling	
Rostov-o-v		
Sakhu-s-o		
Gorky-k-y		
Leningrad-g-r-a-d		
Minsk-s-k		
Saratov-t-o-v		
Kazov-o-v		
Baku, Poland-l-a-n-d		
Stalingrad-g-r-a-d		
Caspian Sea S-e-a		
Helsinki, Finland-l-n-l-a-n-d		
Black Sea S-e-a		
Odessa-s-a		
Arctic Sea S-e-a		



Author and Illustrator

Author **MARIANNE HERING** has been making reading fun since she joined the staff of *Focus on the Family Clubhouse* and *Club Jr.* magazines in 1987. When she isn't writing, she's adventuring in the Colorado Rockies with her family and dog, Sam. Find out more about The Imagination Station books and other fun stuff at MarianneHering.com.

Born in Brazil, illustrator **SERGIO CARIELLO** attended the Word of Life Bible Institute and the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. He's worked as an art teacher and illustrator for many publishers, including Marvel, DC Comics, Disney, David C Cook, Crossgen, and Zondervan. He's also illustrated many books for Focus on the Family,

including The Imagination Station series.

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